4
ART
TAIE
ORIGINAL STORY
Gakuto Mikumo
CHARACTER DESIGNER
Manyako
STRIKE THE BLOOD

STRIKE THE BLOOD

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STRIKE THE BLOOD

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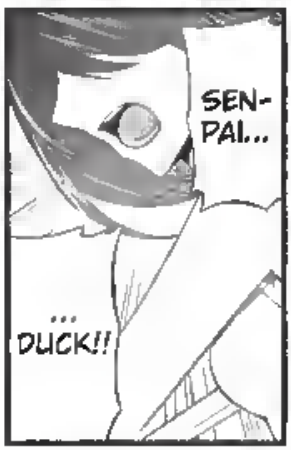
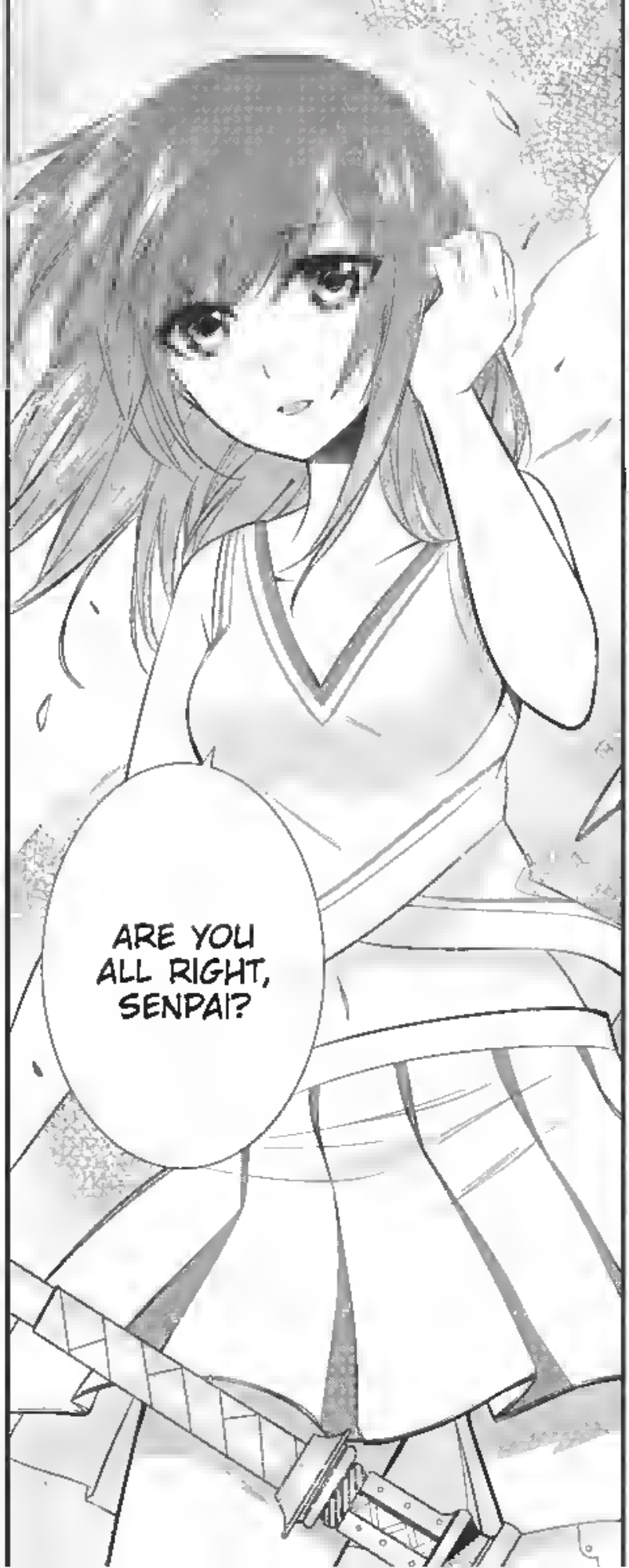
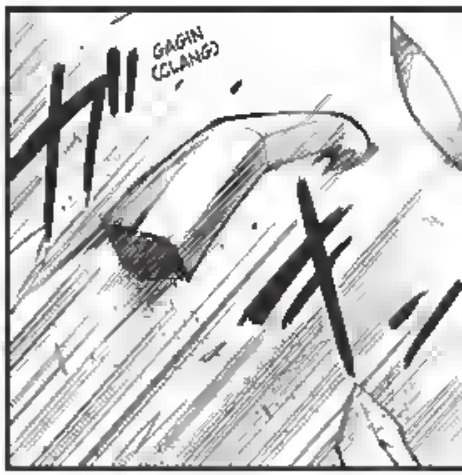
Chapter 15: From the Warlord's Empire




ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SENPAI?

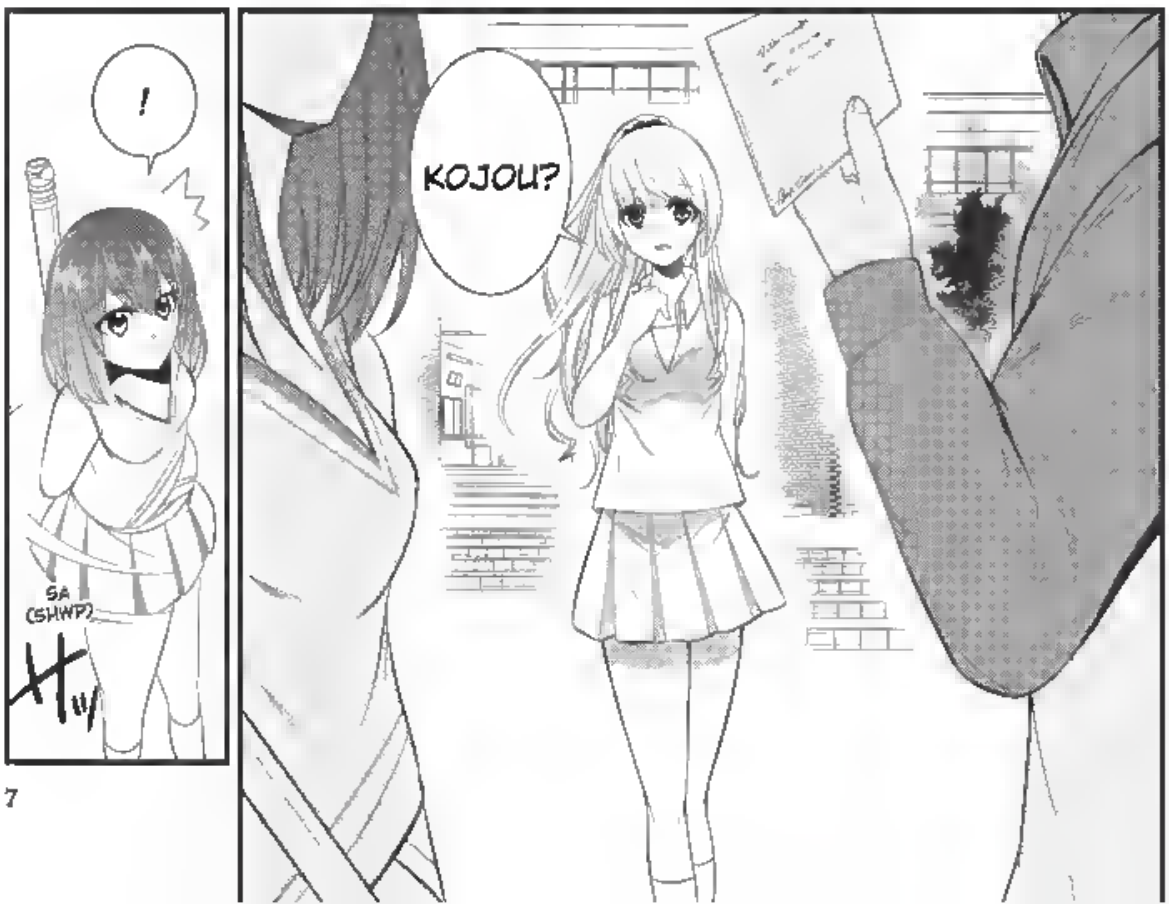

GAGIN (CLANG)

GARAN (CRUMBLE)
GARAN
GARA
GARA

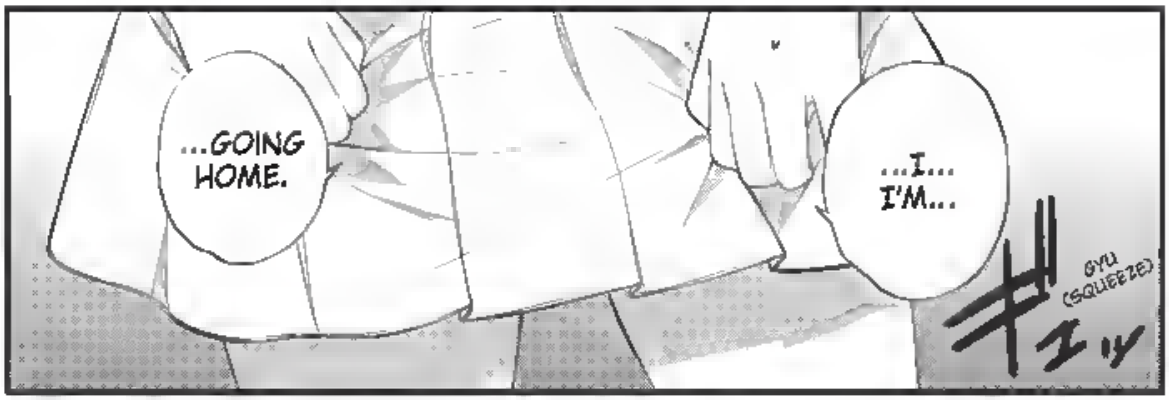
EH?
WAIT... DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING ME AROUND LIKE THAT!?
KIRI (SERIOUS)
キリッ
PLEASE REST EASY. I RESPECT YOUR PRIVACY!
HOW CAN I REST EASY!?
YEAH... THANKS...BUT WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' HERE?
MY SHIKIGAMI SENSED AN OFFENSIVE SPELL.
...HEY, HIMERAGI.
THOSE CLOTHES... ARE YOU —?
I RAN OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF A FITTING !!
PLEASE DO NOT STARE SO MUCH!
BUT YOU, UH, HAVE SOMETHING ON UNDER IT.
EVEN SO, YOU MAY NOT LOOK, SENPAI!
IT'S INDECENT.
HEY, C'MON, THAT'S RUDE.
NOW...
... GETTING TO THE POINT.

NO...
...DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO IS AFTER YOU?
AN ATTACK SPELL OF THIS CALIBER IS NOT THE WORK OF A NORMAL PERSON...
BAKI (KRNCH)
WHY WERE THESE SO HOSTILE...?
THESE TOO ARE SHIKIGAMI. THEY'RE MEANT TO DELIVER MESSAGES AND SUCH...
...WHAT ARE THESE THINGS?
SHUUU (SSSSS)
EH?
...LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE TECHNICALLY FULFILLED THEIR MISSION, THEN.
THE SPELL IS LIFTING...
SHUUUU

AH!
!
THAT SEAL... IT CAN'T BE...
SO THIS IS MEANT FOR ME...?
MM.
YES... BUT...THIS SHOULDN'T BE...
WHAT, YOU KNOW WHO THIS IS FROM?


!
SA (SHWP)
KOJOU?

A-
ASAGI...
HUH?
WHADDAYA MEAN, "INTERRUPT" ...?
AH... IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE.
NOTHING TO DO WITH ME ANYWAY...
ASAGI?
AH...
HAVE I INTERRUPTED SOMETHING ...?


...GOING HOME.
...I... I'M...
GYU (SQUEEZE)

AH! HEY!
TA (DASH)

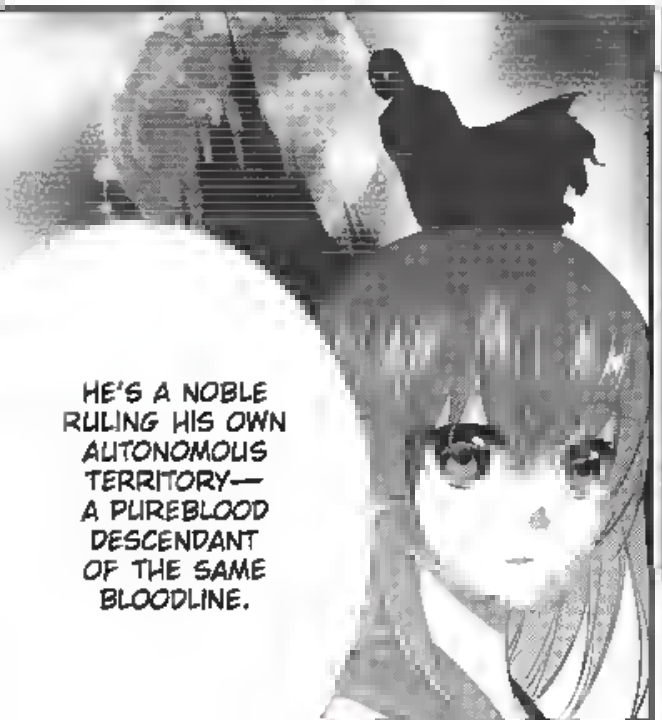
...YOU THINK SO?

...GEEZ, FEELS LIKE...
...SHE SEEMS TO THINK SHE'S GOT SOMETHIN' ON ME NOW, DOESN'T IT?

...DON'T KNOW.
HUH? WELL, THEN, WHAT'S WITH HER?
IT'S AN INVITATION.
PARTY ON A CRUISE SHIP!?
WHO'S DIMITRIE VATTLER, DUKE OF ARDEAL?
THE DUCHY OF ARDEAL IS AN AUTONOMOUS TERRITORY, PART OF THE WARLORD'S EMPIRE.

A DOMINION IN EUROPE.
THE LAND UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE FIRST PRIMOGENITOR. YOU KNOW ABOUT THE LOST WARLORD, YES?
HEARD THE NAME, AT LEAST. THE VAMPIRE CONQUEROR SERVED BY SEVENTY-TWO BEAST VASSALS... AIN'T IT?
AH, THIS ONE'S HALF-PRICE.
WARLORD'S EMPIRE?

...WAS MADE POSSIBLE ONLY WITH THAT RULER'S COOPERATION.
IT IS SAID THAT THE HOLY GROUND TREATY THAT ENABLED THE CO-EXISTENCE OF MAN AND DEMON...


HE'S A NOBLE RULING HIS OWN AUTONOMOUS TERRITORY— A PUREBLOOD DESCENDANT OF THE SAME BLOODLINE.

SO THIS VATTLER GUY...
...IS ONE OF THE FIRST'S MEN?
...HEY, TOO MANY ONIONS!
YOU MUSTN'T BE PICKY.

I IMAGINE IT IS TO MEET YOU, SENPAI.
GOT A POINTS CARD?
WHAT'S A BIGSHOT LIKE HIM COMING TO ITOGAMI ISLAND FOR...?

W...WE DON'T GET ALONG AT ALL.
WE JUST SHOP TOGETHER ON OUR RETURN TRIP FROM SCHOOL BECAUSE WE EAT UNDER THE SAME ROOF.

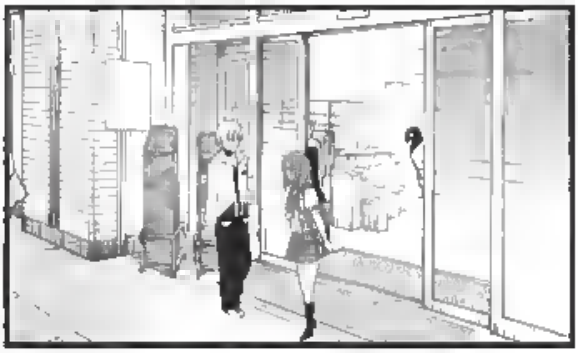
NIKO
GRIND
EH?
YOU TWO GET ALONG SO WELL.

PI (BEEP)
SHOPPING HERE EVERY DAY LIKE THIS...

EH...? YOU DON'T MEAN... AT YOUR AGE...?
?

?
THE SAME ROOF? YOU'RE NOT SIBLINGS, ARE YOU?
NO.

GUESS I'D BETTER HEAR HIM OUT, AT LEAST...



HN?

WHAT WAS THAT OLD LADY SO SURPRISED ABOUT?
WHO KNOWS... WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT DUKE ARDEAL?

IS SOMETHING WRONG?

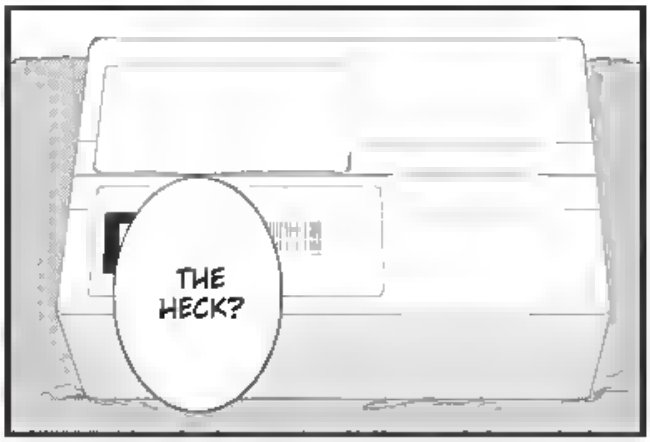
WELL, THAT'S A BIT OF A PROBLEM...
HAVE TO GET SOMEONE WHO'S WILLING TO PLAY THE PART.
ERR... IT KINDA SAYS HERE TO BRING MY "PARTNER" WITH ME...
AHH. IT'S STANDARD TO BRING ONE'S SPOUSE OR LOVER WITH YOU WHEN ATTENDING A PARTY IN THE WEST.
...AND IT SAYS THE PARTY'S TODAY...SO...
YOU NEED SOMEONE WHO KNOWS YOUR TRUE NATURE AND WHO CAN HANDLE DANGEROUS SITUATIONS.
I SUPPOSE NOT.
CAN'T TAKE NAGISA OR ASAGI WITH ME TO THIS, THOUGH.

...NATSUKI-CHAN, MAYBE?
O-OH, YES?
H-HOW DID MINAMIYA-SENSEI'S NAME COME TO MIND...?
WELL, SHE KNOWS ABOUT MY CONDITION, AND SHE'S AN ATTACK MAGE, RIGHT?
W-WELL THERE'S...
...ANOTHER OPTION, I BELIEVE.
EH? AHH...
CAN I ASK YOU TO COME?
...
GOHON (AHEM)
IT'S MY DUTY TO WATCH YOU, SENPAI!

AH! BUT...
GACHA! (KCHK)
HEH...
WH... WHAT'S SO FUNNY!?
...I DON'T...
...HAVE ANYTHING TO WEAR TO A PARTY...
YOU'RE JUST LIKE CINDERELLA.
DON'T TEASE ME LIKE THAT!
GUESS YOU REALLY ARE A GIRL, HIMERAGI.

EH?

AH! WELCOME BACK.
SOMEONE DROPPED OFF A PACKAGE—


THE HECK?

PAKA (OPEN)
!

IT'S FROM... THE LION KING AGENCY?
EH? TO SENPAI...?

IT'S A DRESS.

...WAIST 22...
...BUST 30...
LET'S SEE...
ERR...
...CUSTOM-MADE PARTY DRESS...

KAA (GLUGH)
...HIPS 31...
28B...

PURU
NICE, NICE...
BIGGER THAN I THOUGHT. I'M IMPRESSED.
ERR... B, HUH?
PURU
PURU (TRMBL)

SO THESE ARE YOUR...
HM?

GOGOGOGOGOGO (RRRUMBLE)
IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY...
...BEFORE I ERASE YOUR MEMORY?

GYAH!!!
BIKU (STARTLE)

EH?

NOW, THEN...
POPSICLE, POPSICLLLE! ♪
WHEW... THAT WAS A NICE BATH.
OH!
KOJOU-KUN, DID YOU WANT SOME ICE—
EHH!? WHAT'S WITH THAT OUTFIT?
AH, THIS?

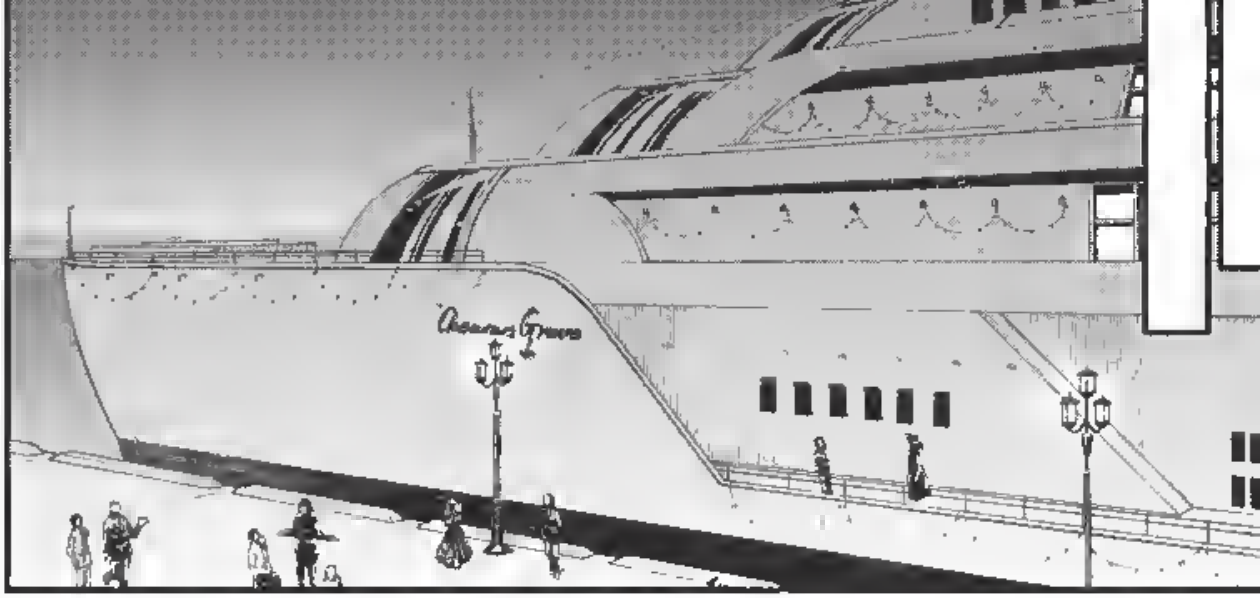
A PART-TIME JOB? AT NIGHT?
SUBBIN' FOR AN OVERWORKED CLASSMATE. IT'S JUST FOR TONIGHT.

ACTUALLY, I'M DOING A PART-TIME JOB.

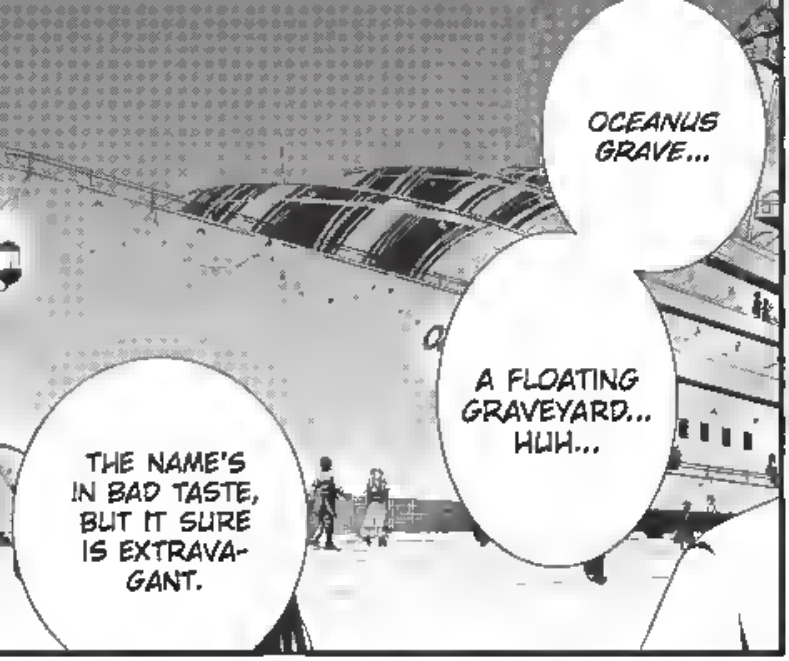
SEE, HIS PARENTS HAVE A 150 MILLION YEN DEBT TO PAY, SO...
...IF I DON'T DO THIS FOR HIM, THEY CAN'T COVER MEDICAL COSTS FOR HIS SICK OLDER SISTER...

SORRY ABOUT LEAVING YOU TO HOLD THE FORT, BUT THANKS.
YEAH, I GOT IT...BE CAREFUL, KOJOU-KUN.

I SEE...
I GUESS IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO. BUT DON'T DO ANYTHING INDECENT.

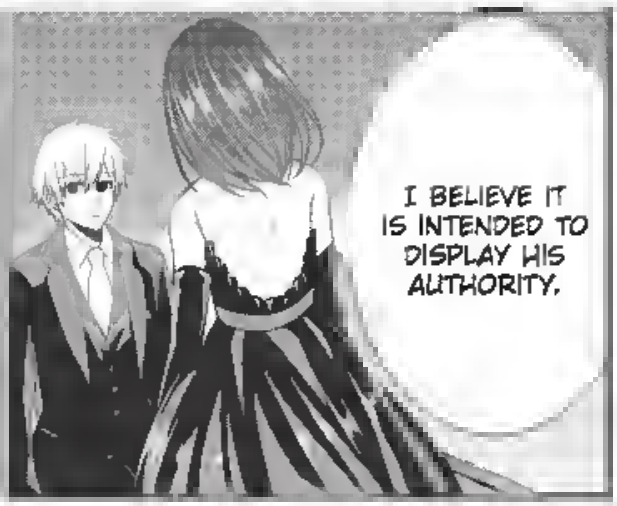


MAKE SURE YOUR NECKTIE'S ON STRAIGHT.
I JUST CAN'T RELAX WHILE WEARING THIS THING...


OCEANUS GRAVE...
A FLOATING GRAVEYARD... HUH...
THE NAME'S IN BAD TASTE, BUT IT SURE IS EXTRAVAGANT.

THIS SHIP, IS IT?

...NAGISA-CHAN'S A GOOD GIRL, ISN'T SHE?


I BELIEVE IT IS INTENDED TO DISPLAY HIS AUTHORITY.

YEAH, YEAH.
YOU REALLY MUST HOLD IT TOGETHER TO AVOID CAUSING NAGISA-CHAN ANY TROUBLE, SENPAI.

WELL... THE WILDER THE STORY, THE EASIER SHE BELIEVES IT...
SHE BELIEVED A PLAINLY SUSPICIOUS LIE LIKE THAT BECAUSE SHE TRUSTS YOU.

...
HM
...
MM?
INCIDENTALLY, THIS OUTFIT...
IT'S RIDICULOUS, ISN'T IT?
...NO...
GASHA (KCHAK)
Y-YOU HAVE INDECENT THOUGHTS WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR FACE!
...WHAT'S WITH THE SPEAR!?
BO (BLUSH)
IT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU.

...YOUR BARRETTE IS CROOKED.
AH?
I DO NOT.
BY THE WAY...
MY ROOMMATE FROM HIGH GOD GROVE GAVE THIS TO ME.
SO (STROKE)
YOU DON'T USUALLY WEAR STUFF IN YOUR HAIR, HIMERAGI.
GIRL (CLENCH)
...I WONDER WHAT SHE'S DOING RIGHT NOW?
HUH. A SWORD SHAMAN?
NO, BUT SHE'S AN ATTACK MAGE OF THE LION KING AGENCY, LIKE ME.

CAN'T GET IN WITHOUT SHOWIN' THE INVITATION. WHAT A PAIN.
WE STICK OUT LIKE SORE THUMBS HERE.
THIS IS THE PARTY HALL, I BELIEVE.

...EASIER SAID THAN DONE. SO WHERE IS THE GUY ANYWAY?
PLEASE ACT MORE APPROPRI-ATELY.

UH... WE'VE GOTTA GO IN THERE?
I SO WANNA GO HOME...
YOU WERE INVITED SPECIALLY BY THE FIRST PRIMOGENITOR, SO HE'S THE FIRST PERSON YOU SHOULD GREET.

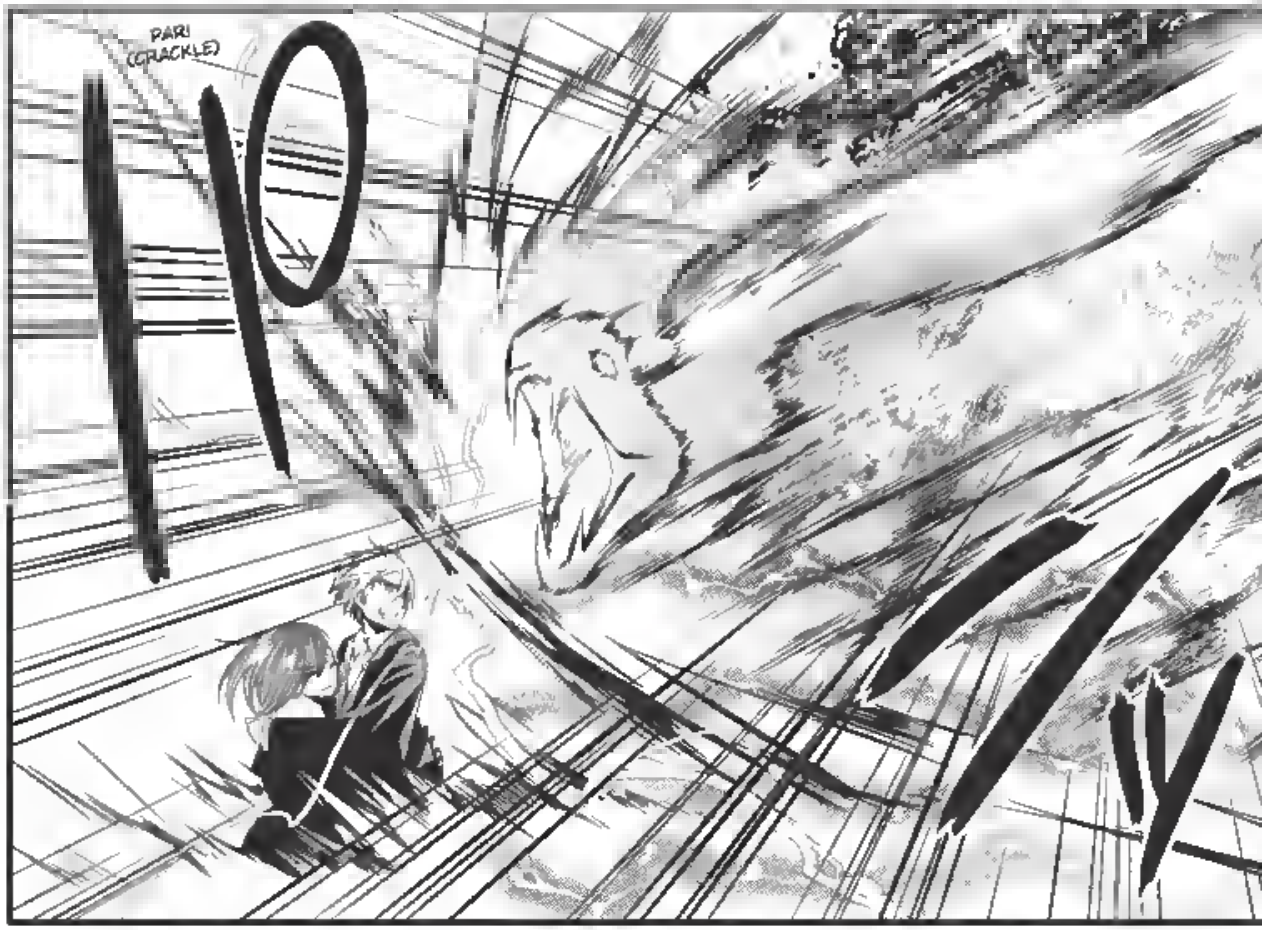
APPARENTLY, NOT HERE... PROBABLY FURTHER IN.

KO
OKLAKO
KO

!!
GOO
CRMMMRL
I FEEL GREAT MAGICAL POWER IN THIS AREA...

HIME-
RAGI!
BA
(LUNGE)
GOOOO
TO
(TNK)
SEN-
PAI!
GIN
(GLARE)

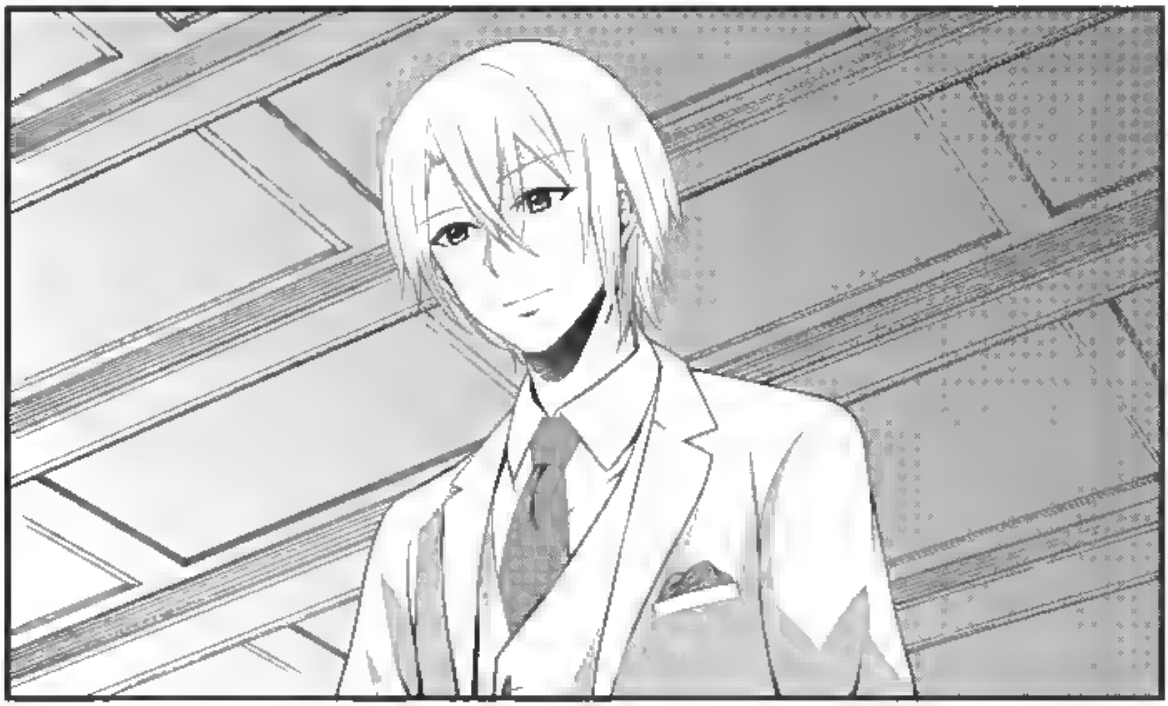
GOT
(WHOOSH)

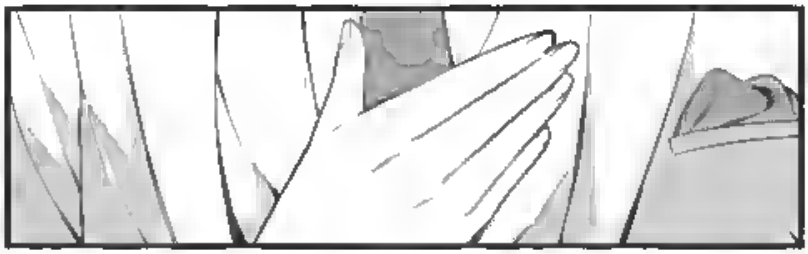

PARI
(CRACKLE)

HFF!
HAAH!

PARI
PARI

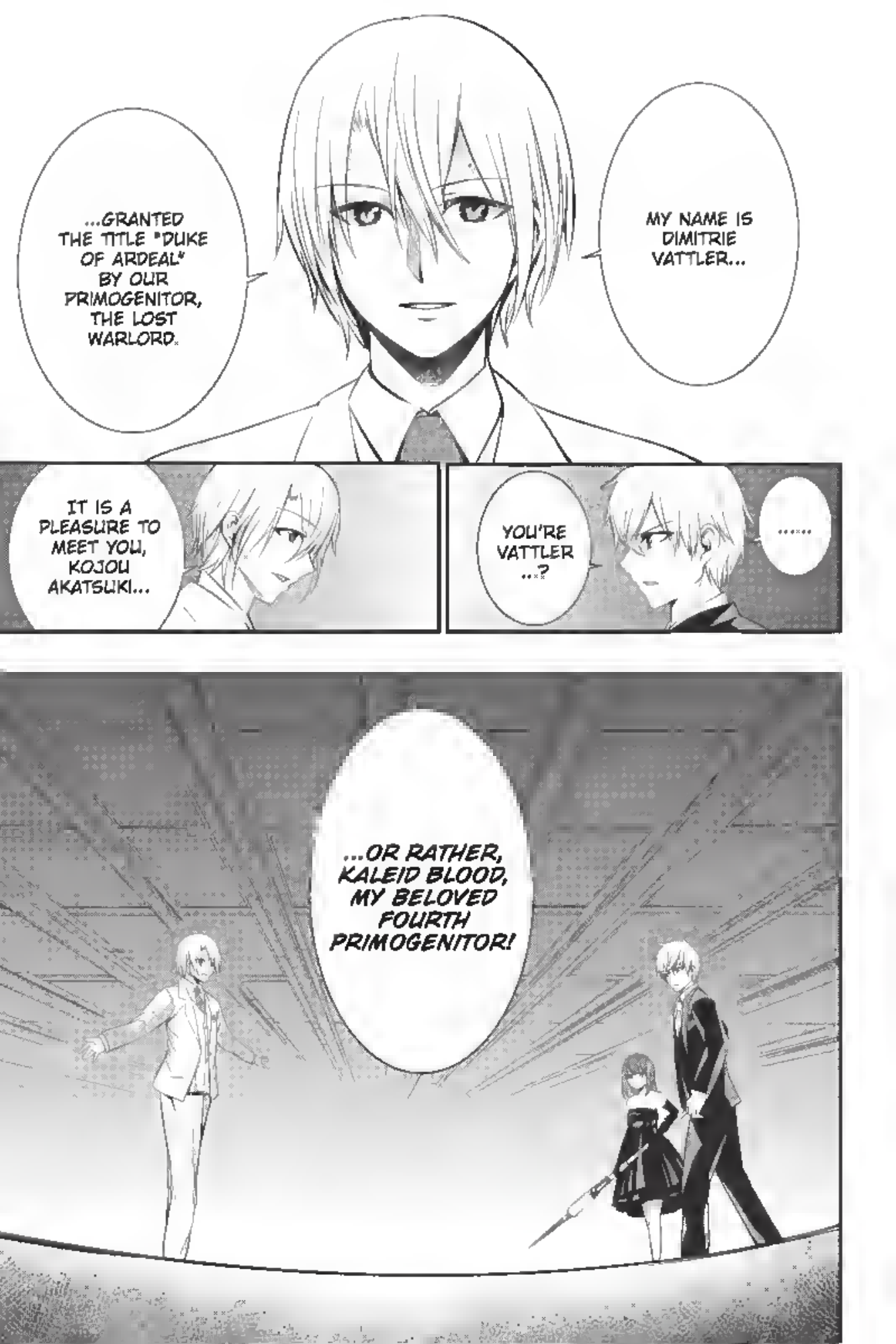
PACHIN (FLICK)
SEN-PAI.
GASHA (RATTLE)
SOMEONE'S COMING FROM INSIDE.
HAAH!
THAT WAS CLOSE. SOME KIND OF... SNAKE BEAST VASSAL?
SHUUUU (SSSSSS)
HFF!
KO
KO (TAK)
SO THAT LEVEL OF BEAST VASSAL WAS INDEED UNABLE TO EVEN SCRATCH YOU.
MY, MY. QUITE SPLENDID.





.....

I APOLOGIZE FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART...
...FOR BEHAVING SO RUDELY IN MY DESIRE TO TEST YOUR STRENGTH.


MY NAME IS DIMITRIE VATTLER...
...GRANTED THE TITLE "DUKE OF ARDEAL" BY OUR PRIMOGENITOR, THE LOST WARLORD.
IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, KOJOU AKATSUKI...
YOU'RE VATTLER ...?
.....
...OR RATHER, KALEID BLOOD, MY BELOVED FOURTH PRIMOGENITOR!

STRIKE THE BLOOD

DEFINITION

<<SHIKIGAMI>>

Similar to familiars, shikigami are employed via spells using magic-infused scrolls and the like as mediums. They are used for delivering messages, surveillance, espionage activities, and even combat. They range in shape from birds and other small creatures all the way up to human size. Their abilities vary greatly depending on the caster. A highly-skilled practitioner is capable of employing multiple elaborate shikigami even in remote locations.

...GRANTED THE TITLE "DUKE OF ARDEAL" BY OUR PRIMOGENITOR, THE LOST WARLORD.
I AM POSITIVELY DELIGHTED THAT YOU HAVE GRACED US WITH YOUR PRESENCE THIS EVENING.
MY NAME IS DIMITRIE VATTLER...
YOU'RE VATTLER ...?
GEEZ, WHAT'S WITH THE THEATRICS ...?
SFX: GACHA CKCHAK
...OR RATHER, KALEID BLOOD, MY BELOVED FOURTH PRIMO-GENITOR!
IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, KOJOU AKATSUKI...

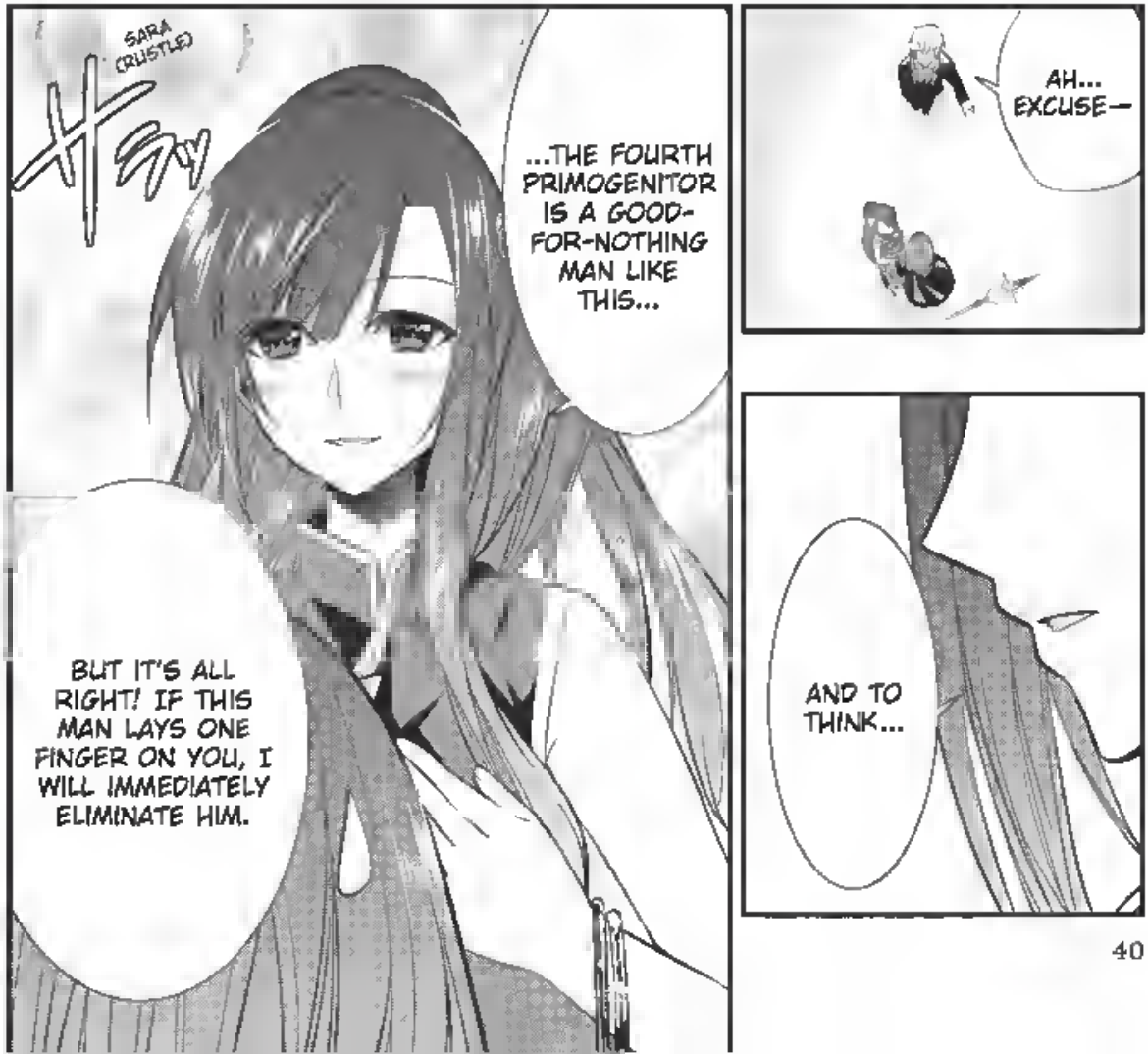
Chapter 16:
The Nalakuvera

HYUO (SWISH)
GYUN (ZWIP)
!?
KO (KLAK)
KO
KO
GET AWAY FROM YUKINA...
...KOJOU AKATSUKI.
A FORK?

WH... WHO'RE YOU?
.....
SAYAKA...?
GOSHI (RUB)
SAYAKA?
DA (LEAD)

...ER.
YUKINA!
IT'S BEEN SO LONG. YOU'VE BEEN WELL?
WAH!
I STILL AM.
I'VE COME HERE AS DUKE ARDEAL'S WATCHER.
SAME AS YOU.
WEREN'T YOU ASSIGNED TO MULTINATIONAL SORCERY CRIMES IN THE FOREIGN BRANCH?
Y-YES, BUT...WHY ARE YOU HERE, SAYAKA ...?

BURU (TREMBLE)
BURU
BURU
ER, SAYA...
BUT REALLY, LION KING AGENCY WAS SO CRUEL...
...FORCING YOU TO TAKE WATCHER DUTY ON THAT FOURTH PRIMOGENITOR WHILE I WASN'T THERE...
GASHA (RUSTLE)
THEN... THE INVITATION LETTER TO COME HERE...
YES, HE ASKED ME TO SEND IT.

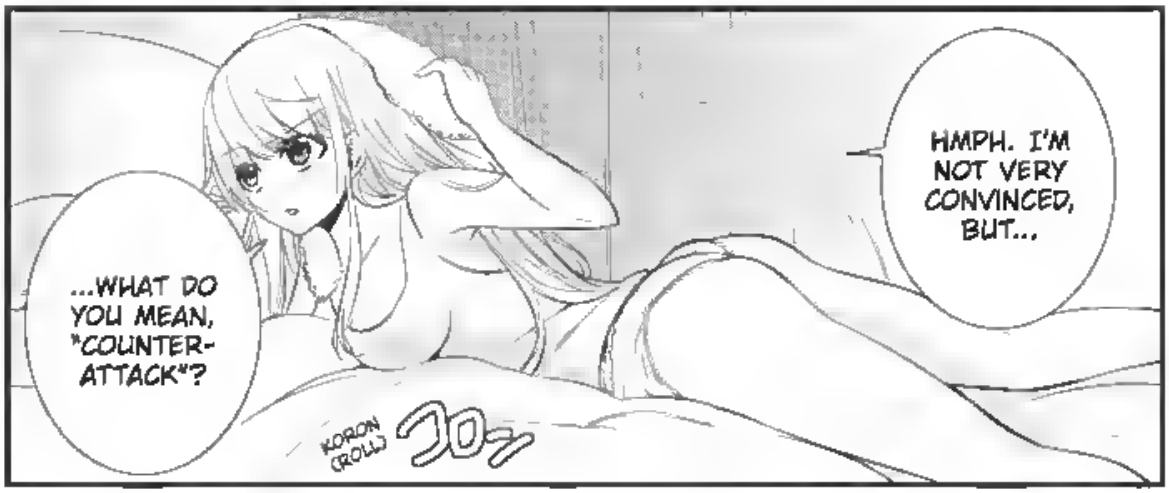

SARA (RUSTLE)
...THE FOURTH PRIMOGENITOR IS A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING MAN LIKE THIS...
BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT! IF THIS MAN LAYS ONE FINGER ON YOU, I WILL IMMEDIATELY ELIMINATE HIM.
AH... EXCUSE—
AND TO THINK...

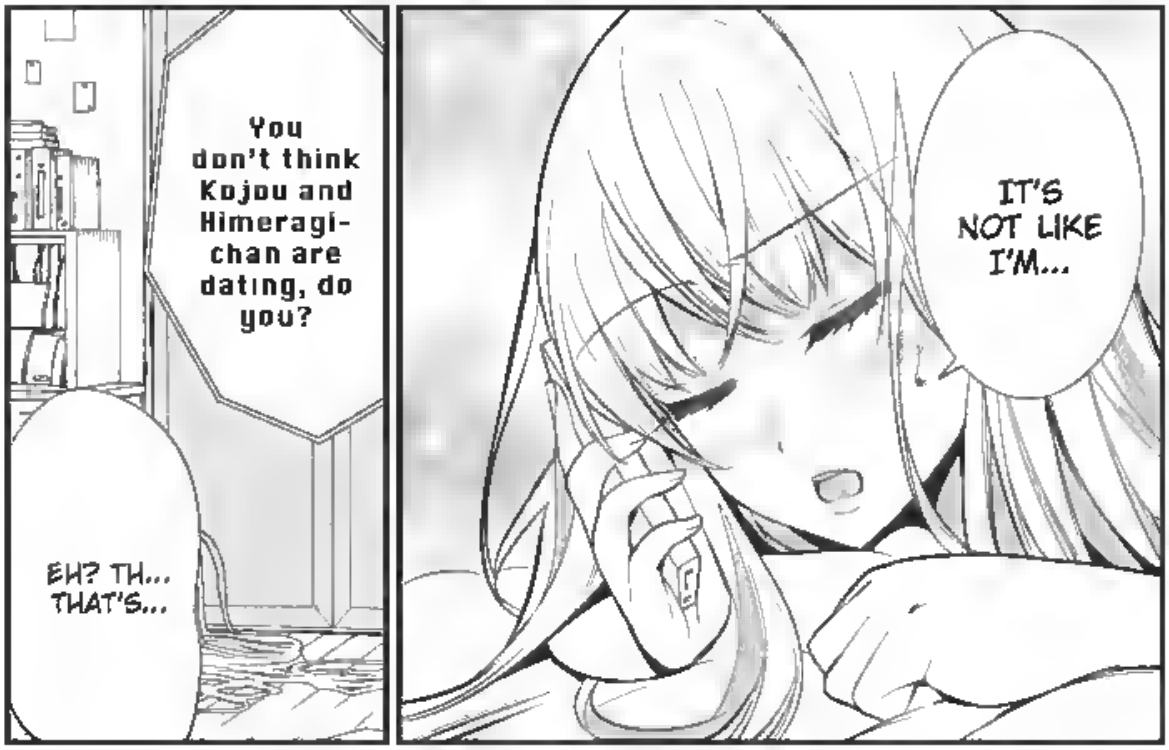
HUH?
I DON'T WANT YOU EVEN SPEAKING YUKINA'S NAME.
I'M SURE YUKINA FEELS THE SAME.
WH... WHAT'S WITH HER...?
H-HEY, HIME-RAGI—
DON'T SPEAK HER NAME!
MUST HAVE FALLEN OFF EARLIER ...
YUKINA ...
KIRA (GLITTER)
...HERE YOU GO.
WELL, SOMETIMES THAT'S TRUE...
AH... NO, I...
GAKU (WILT)
HIME-RAGI...

FUWA (FLUTTER)
YES...
PAA (SHINE)
I'M SO GLAD YOU USE IT...
IT REALLY MATCHES YOUR PRETTY HAIR.
KI (GLARE)
SAYAKA KIRASAKA, WAR DANCER OF THE LION KING AGENCY.
MY ROOMMATE FROM HIGH GOD GROVE.
FUWA
FUWA
HEY... WHO IS THIS!?

BOTH ARE ATTACK MAGES...
...BUT THE SKILLS WE ARE TRAINED IN DIFFER.
"WAR DANCER"? IS THAT DIFFERENT FROM A SWORD SHAMAN?
WAR DANCERS SPECIALIZE IN CURSES AND ASSASSINATIONS.
SO IT'S MY DUTY TO ELIMINATE PERVERTS HOVERING OVER YUKINA...
.....
GIRA (SHING)
...SO NOW THAT YOU KNOW...
...YOU'LL STOP HOVERING AROUND YUKINA, YES?
GIMME A BREAK...
SHE'S THE ONE HOVERIN' OVER ME...

...IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS RUNNING AWAY FROM KOJOU AND HER!!
HEY, THAT'S WHY I SAID...
HUNH?
Only option you have left is seduction, huh...
HEY, C'MON, DON'T SAY THAT.
I'M SERIOUSLY THINKIN' FOR MY CHILDHOOD FRIEND HERE.
You're having a really good time with this.
WELL, SHE HAD A CHEERLEADER OUTFIT ON, RIGHT?
ISN'T SEDUCTION THE ONLY COUNTER-ATTACK?

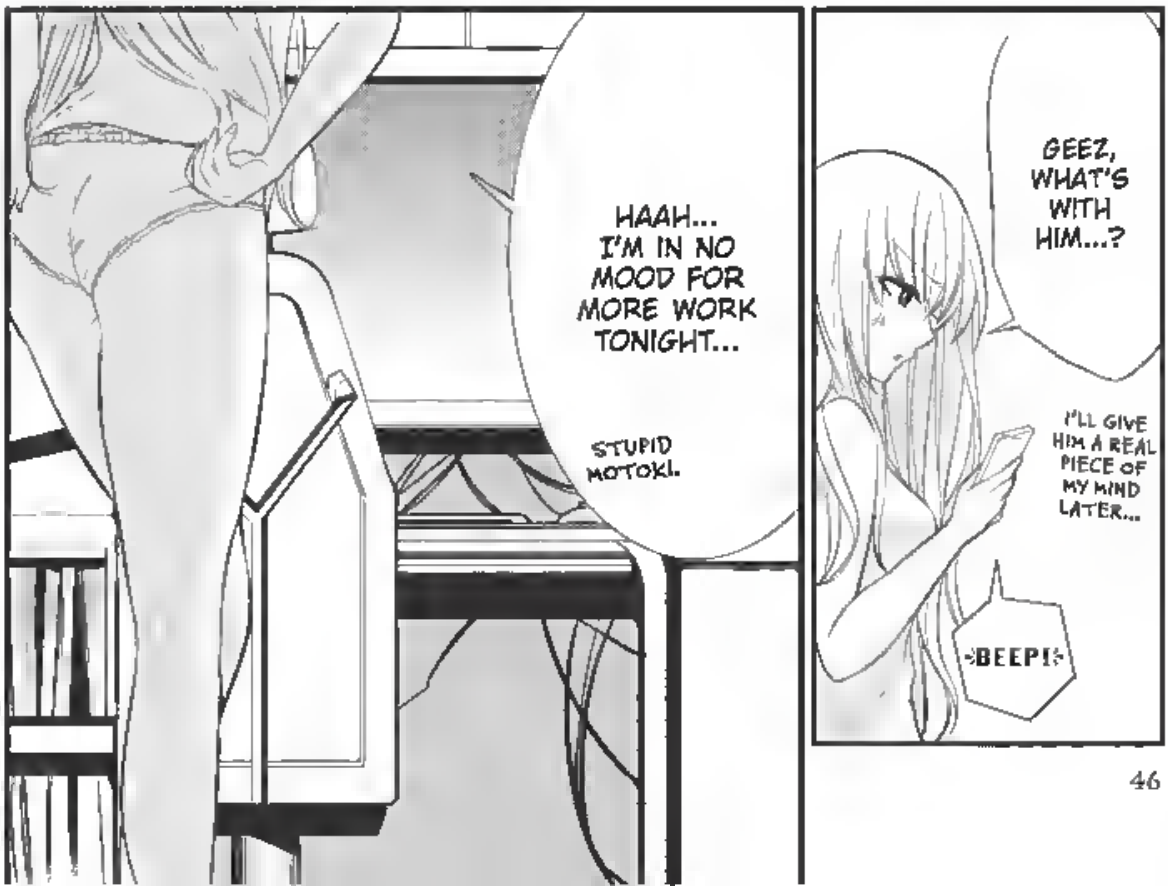

HMPH. I'M NOT VERY CONVINCED, BUT...
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "COUNTER-ATTACK"?
KORON (ROLL)

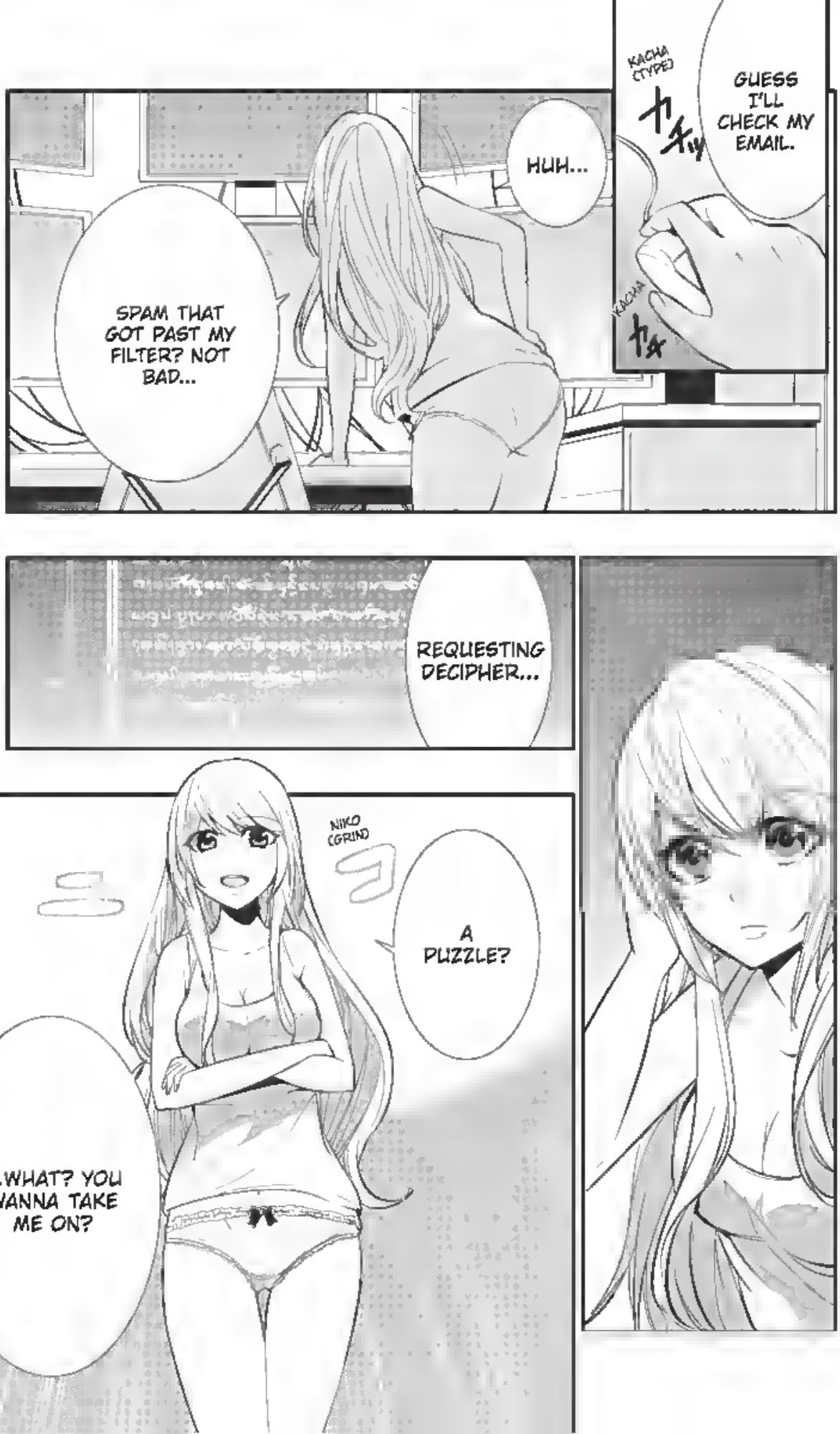

You don't think Kojou and Himeragi-chan are dating, do you?
EH? TH... THAT'S...
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M...

Y... YOU THINK?
THEN WHY ARE THEY SNEAKING AROUND TOGETHER?
IF HE WAS DATING HER, HE'D TELL YOU.
OHH, CUTIE DEAD AHEAD!
I DON'T THINK SO.
AH-HA-HA...

THEY'RE NOT DATING, BUT THERE'S A SECRET.
MAYBE SHE'S GOT SOMETHING ON HIM...
GUSHA (CRUSH)
...LIKE WHAT?
Dunno. It's just a theory...

HUH!?
HEY, MOTOKI! HOLD ON A SEC!
PI (BEEP)
Oh, my honey's callin', Laterrr!
You'll just haue to seduce it out of him!

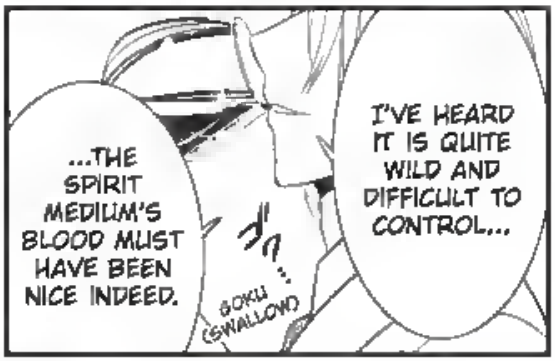

HAAH... I'M IN NO MOOD FOR MORE WORK TONIGHT...
STUPID MOTOKI.
GEEZ, WHAT'S WITH HIM...?
I'LL GIVE HIM A REAL PIECE OF MY MIND LATER...
BEEP!


KACHA (TYPE)
GUESS I'LL CHECK MY EMAIL.
KACHA
HUH...
SPAM THAT GOT PAST MY FILTER? NOT BAD...
REQUESTING DECIPHER...
NIKO (GRIN)
A PUZZLE?
...WHAT? YOU WANNA TAKE ME ON?

KYORO
KYORO (GLANCE)
VIP ROOM
"REGULUS AURUM," WASN'T IT?
...NOW, THEN, THE POWER THAT REPELLED MY BEAST VASSAL...
SURE.
IF YOU WILL EXCUSE US.
.....
...YOU KNOW IT?

YES. IT'S THE FIFTH BEAST VASSAL...
...OF AVRORA FLORESTINA, THE KALEID BLOOD, IS IT NOT?

WHAT RELATION DID YOU... HAVE TO AVRORA?


I'VE HEARD IT IS QUITE WILD AND DIFFICULT TO CONTROL...
GOKU (SWALLOW)
...THE SPIRIT MEDIUM'S BLOOD MUST HAVE BEEN NICE INDEED.

I LOVE HER.
I SWORE MY ETERNAL LOVE TO HER.

.....

AREN'T YOU PART OF THE FIRST PRIMO-GENITOR'S CLAN?
WELL YES, BUT OUR PRIMOGENITOR IS NOT THE SORT WHO CARES MUCH ABOUT THAT KIND OF THING.
LOVE...
THAT'S HOW VAMPIRES ARE, YES?
NIKO (GRIN)
IF THE BLOOD IS STRONG IT'S ALL RIGHT.
DON (SLAM)
SU (GENTLE)
SO, SHALL WE SPEAK FONDLY OF LOVE...
...KOJOU AKATSUKI?
STRONG ANCESTORS LEAVE STRONG DESCENDANTS BEHIND, AFTER ALL.
.....

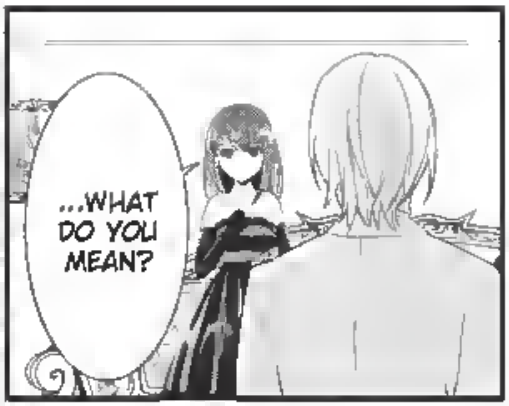
BUT YOU CONSUMED HER.
I'M NOT AVRORA!!
WAIT A MINUTE HERE!!
DID YOU NOT?
...WHO INHERITED HER BLOOD.
MO (SHUDDER)
...I GRANT MY LOVE TO THE ONE...
SU... (STROKE)
THAT'S WHY...

WHEN IT CONCERNS HER BLOODLINE, 'TIS BUT A SMALL, TRIFLING THING.
FIRST, I'M A GUY!!
I'M TELLIN' YOU THAT LOGIC'S ALL MESSED UP! WHAT? SAME BLOOD, ANYTHING GOES!?
I...I'M SAVED...
MM? AND YOU ARE?
THERE IS SOMETHING I MUST ASK YOU.
DUKE ARDEAL.
I AM YUKINA HIMERAGI, SWORD SHAMAN OF THE LION KING AGENCY.
I HAVE COME TONIGHT AS WATCHER OF THE FOURTH PRIMOGENITOR.
HMM... I SEE.
MISS SAYAKA'S COLLEAGUE, THEN?

INCIDENTALLY, KOJOU'S BODY CARRIES THE SAME SCENT AS YOUR BLOOD...
HEH HEH...
...WERE YOU THE SPIRIT MEDIUM FOR "REGULUS AURUM" BY ANY CHANCE?
!?
YOU CAN TELL THAT!?
!
WHAT !?
NO, I MERELY WANTED TO PUT IT OUT THERE.
BUT IF YOU ARE INDEED KOJOU'S BLOOD COMPANION ...
...THAT WOULD MAKE YOU MY RIVAL IN LOVE.
RIVAL IN LOVE...

GIRI (CLENCH)
UNFOR-GIVABLE...
.....
...PLEASE SHARE WITH US YOUR REASON FOR VISITING ITOGAMI ISLAND.
A... ANYWAY...
...I CAN-NOT...
GOGOGO (RUMBLE)
...TO MAKE MY YUKINA...
...MAKE A FACE LIKE THAT...
ZUZU (SIP)
...FORGIVE HIM!
BUT THERE IS ANOTHER MATTER AS WELL.
DON'T SAY YES TO THAT!!
BUT OF COURSE.
OR IS AN UNSEEMLY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FOURTH PRIMOGENITOR YOUR GOAL?

ONCE A SOLDIER NATIVE TO THE WARLORD'S EMPIRE, HE BRIEFLY GAINED NOTORIETY IN EUROPE AS A TERRORIST.
AS A LEADER OF A GROUP OF RADICALS KNOWN AS THE BLACK DEATH EMPEROR FRONT...
...TEN YEARS AGO HE TOOK OVER THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN PRAGUE, RESULTING IN OVER FOUR HUNDRED DEATHS.


...WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

DO YOU KNOW THE NAME KRISTOF GARDOS?

BUT WEREN'T THEY WIPED OUT YEARS AGO?
I WAS SURE THEIR LEADER WAS ASSASSINATED.

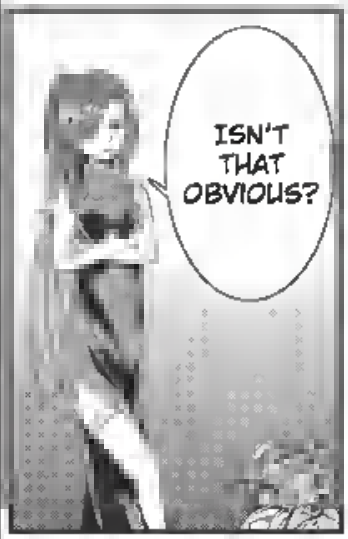
I'VE HEARD OF THE BLACK DEATH EMPEROR FRONT.

HE WAS AN ELDERLY BEAST-MAN WITH A SOMEWHAT TROUBLESOME SPECIAL ABILITY.
THE REMNANTS HIRED GARDOS TO BE THEIR NEW LEADER.
I KILLED HIM.
YOUR QUICK WIT SERVES YOU WELL, KOJOU.
YES, IT SEEMS HE HAS INFILTRATED THIS ISLAND ALONG WITH HIS MEN...
...WAIT A SEC.
YOU'RE NOT SAYIN' THESE GUYS HAVE COME TO THIS ISLAND...
THAT CAN'T BE...
TO SO EASILY INFILTRATE AN ISLAND PROTECTED BY THE HOLY GROUND TREATY...
I'M NOT SURE...
...WHAT METHOD THEY USED, BUT...

HEH.
...MAYBE THEY JUST CAUGHT YOU NAPPING?

THE BLACK DEATH EMPEROR FRONT IS A BEAST-MAN SUPREMACIST GROUP.
THEY WANT TO DESTROY THE HOLY GROUND TREATY AND SEIZE THE WARLORD'S EMPIRE FROM THE FIRST PRIMOGENITOR.
ITOGAMI ISLAND IS A DEMON SANCTUARY... A CITY ESTABLISHED ACCORDING TO THE HOLY GROUND TREATY. AN INCIDENT HERE WILL GET WORLDWIDE ATTENTION.
THAT'S TERRORISM 101.

.....
...SO WHAT DO THEY WANT?


ISN'T THAT OBVIOUS?

WAIT. THERE ARE OTHER DEMON SANCTUARIES.
WHY PICK THIS ISLAND?
YES, I WONDER WHY?
...NO ONE WANTS TO SAY IT?
BECAUSE IT'S MORE ENTERTAINING THIS WAY.
LET'S GET RIGHT TO THE POINT.
DUKE ARDEAL, DID YOU COME HERE TO ASSASSINATE KRISTOF GARDOS?
.....
WHY, YOU...

GOKU (GULP)
HOW-EVER...
MY PARTICULAR BEAST VASSALS...
...ARE NOT SUITED FOR SUCH DELICATE WORK.
I INTEND TO DO NOTHING SO TROUBLE-SOME.
GASHAN (SMASH)
...I WILL BE FORCED TO ENGAGE THEM, YES?
...IF GARDOS'S SIDE SHOULD TRY TO KILL ME...
PAKI (SNAP)
BUT IF DANGER SHOULD BEFALL ME, WHO KNOWS WHAT MY BEAST VASSALS WOULD DO?
OF COURSE NOT.
PAKI
GASHA (CRUNCH)
...I SEE.
THIS RIDICULOUSLY CONSPICUOUS SHIP'S FOR DRAWING 'EM OUT...

SINKING THIS ISLAND IS NO GREAT CONCERN TO THEM.
SO I THOUGHT I SHOULD APOLOGIZE... IN ADVANCE.

ZA (STEP)
IF I MAY SAY SO, YOU NEED NOT CONCERN YOURSELF WITH THE MATTER, DUKE ARDEAL.
HIME-RAGI?

GA (SHOCK)
WHY, YOU... ARE YOU SERIOUS!?

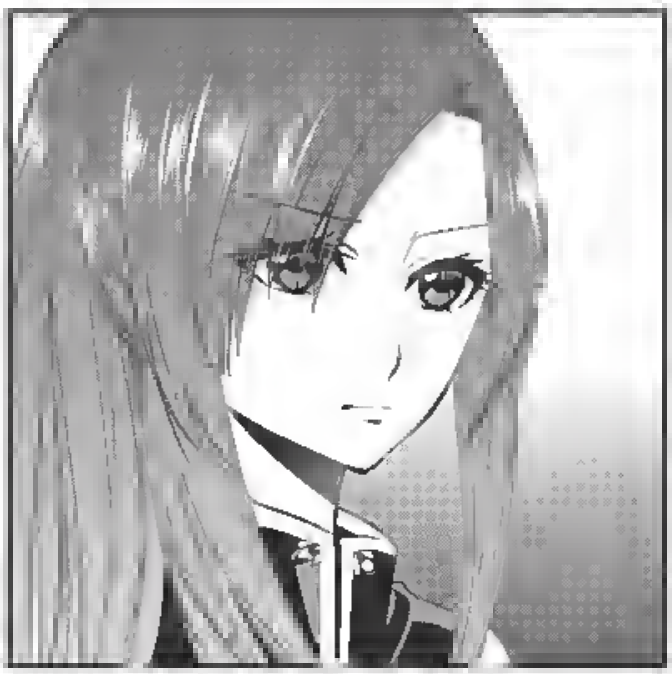
SU (SHFF)

I THINK EVEN MY BEAST VASSALS ARE BETTER BEHAVED THAN THE FOURTH PRIMO-GENITOR'S...
WHAT COULD YOU MEAN, I WONDER?
SURELY YOU DO NOT SUGGEST KOJOU MIGHT TAKE CARE OF GARDOS IN MY PLACE?
YOU MAY BE RIGHT... THAT IS WHY...
!!
YUKINA !?
...I WILL APPREHEND THE BLACK DEATH EMPEROR FRONT REMNANTS ...
I WILL ACT IN THE FOURTH PRIMOGENITOR'S PLACE AND STOP THEM BEFORE THEY CAN ASSAULT YOU, DUKE ARDEAL!

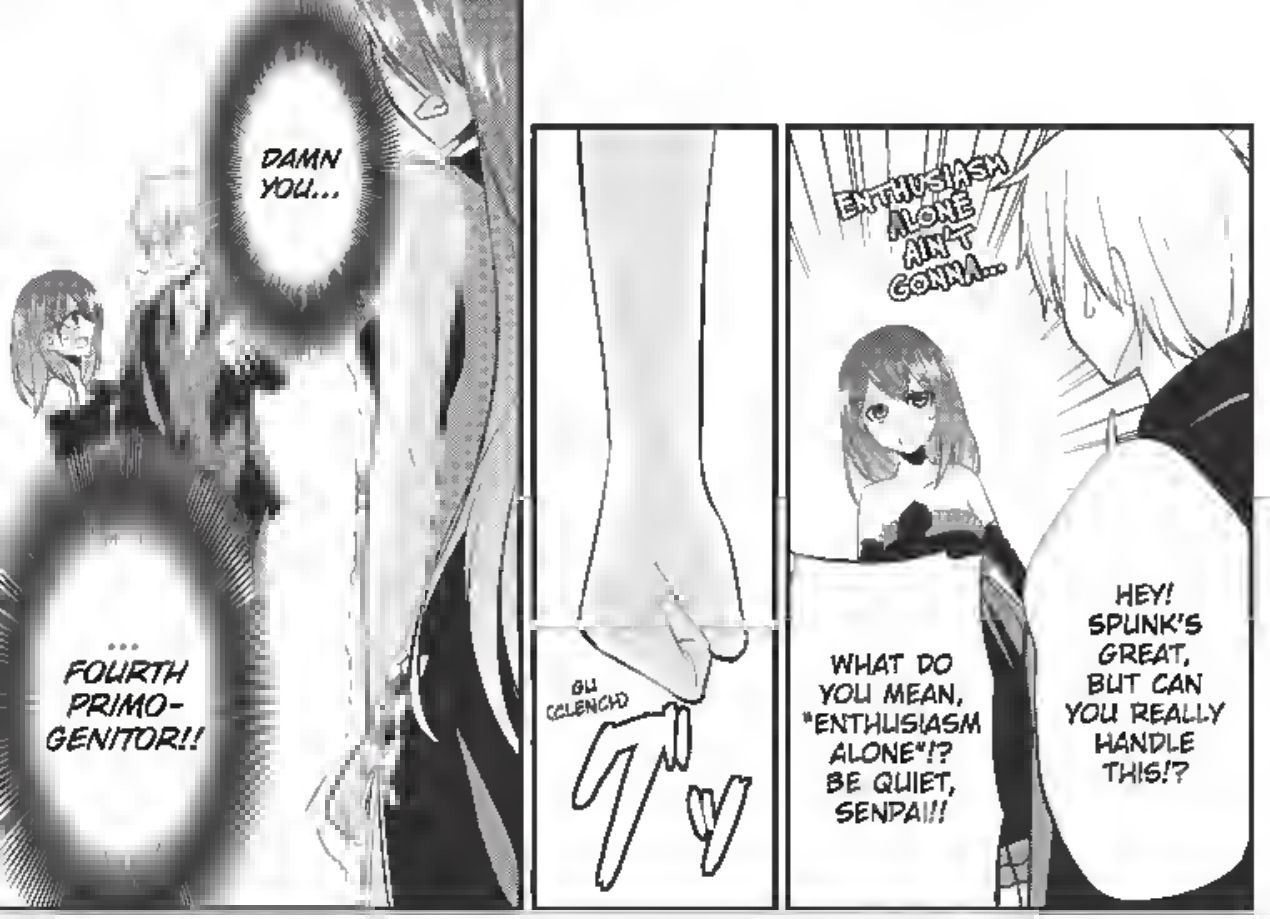
INTEREST-
ING.
HMM...
I SEE.

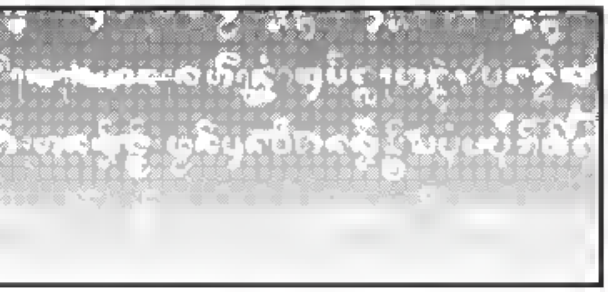
...

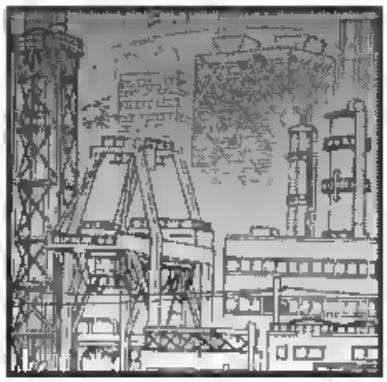
WHY, FOR SOME-ONE LIKE THAT ...?
WHY, YUKINA ...?



VERY WELL. LET US FIRST SEE THE MIGHT...
...OF THE LION KING AGENCY'S SWORD SHAMAN...


DAMN YOU...
...FOURTH PRIMO-GENITOR!!
GU CLENCHD
ENTHUSIASM ALONE AIN'T GONNA...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "ENTHUSIASM ALONE"!? BE QUIET, SENPA!!!
HEY! SPUNK'S GREAT, BUT CAN YOU REALLY HANDLE THIS!?





.....

PI (BEEP)
GASHUN GKSHOONK
!?

THIS IS A CLASS VI CLASSIFIED ZONE.
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?
W-WAIT THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!
THIS PLACE IS—
RESEARCH CHIEF MAKIMURA. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THIS LABORATORY ...
...IS UTILIZING MATERIALS THAT VIOLATE THE SORCERY IMPORT CONTROL ACT.
YOUSUKE MAKIMURA OF THE KANO ALCHEMICAL INDUSTRIES RESEARCH BRANCH, I PRESUME?

!
KRISTOF GARDOS.
...WE APPREHENDED ONE OF HIS SUBORDINATES.
A FEW DAYS AGO...
DOGO (WHAM)
NOW, WOULD YOU COME WITH US?
!
.....
MEKI (KRRIK)
HMPH.
MEKI
MEKI
GARA (CRUMBLE)
NGH...
.....

GOOO (ROAR)
MEKI (KRRIK)
SO HE'S AN UNREGISTERED DEMON...A BLACK DEATH EMPEROR FRONT SYMPATHIZER?
MEKI
MEKI
MEKI
DOGA (WHAM)
SA (WHIRL)
ASTARTE.

FUWA (FLUTTER)
ACCEPT.
I DON'T MIND IF YOU'RE A LITTLE ROUGH.
ARREST HIM.
THIS SCENT... A HOMUNCULUS?
DO YOU THINK THIS BRAT CAN STOP ME...!?
...EXECUTE "RHODODAKTYLOS."

!?
"BASA
(RUSTLE)
GYURURURU
(SWIRRRL)
DOGO
(WHAM)
WHA
...?

...B... BEAST VASSAL ...!?
WHY DOES A HOMUN-CULUS HAVE A...?
GAH!
THE NEWBIE DID IT, NOT ME.
NO NEED TO THANK ME.
...I'M VERY SORRY, INSTRUC-TOR MINA-MIYA.
YOUR AID WAS INVALUABLE.
...NOW, THEN.
THEY SMUGGLED THIS?

CANNOT CONFIRM TARGET.
HYPOTHESIS: TARGET HAS ALREADY BEEN REMOVED FROM THIS FACILITY.
...AND THE ORIGINAL?
.....
I SEE...
NOBI!!! (STRETCH)
のび
DECRYPTION COMPLETE!
NOT MUCH CHALLENGE.
TAN (TAP)
タン
SO WE'RE TOO LATE...
KATA (TAPPA)
カタ
KATA
カタ

MM?
...IS REALLY GOING TO DO THE TRICK...
SIGH... I WONDER IF SEDUCTION...
PON (POP)
Thank you for the analysis
WHAT'S THIS?
NALAKU-VERA?

STRIKE THE BLOOD

DEFINITION

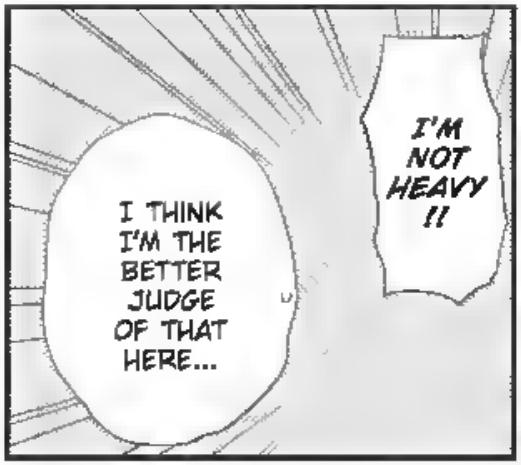
<<SHAMANIC WAR DANCER >>

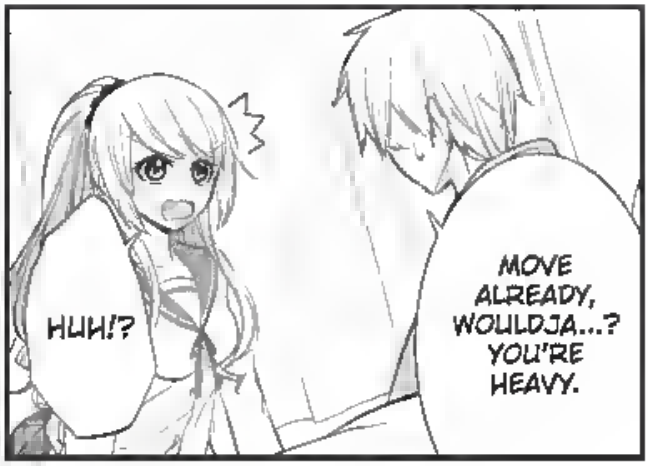
Like the Sword Shaman, an attack mage of the Lion King Agency. They are specialists in hexes and assassination and are generally assigned to VIP protection, espionage, and other crucial missions. They possess a broad knowledge of medicine, pharmaceuticals, international relations, and even linguistics — elites even by Lion King Agency standards. While not quite as formidable in direct combat as Sword Shamans, they employ a variety of exceptionally potent spells to supplement their abilities.

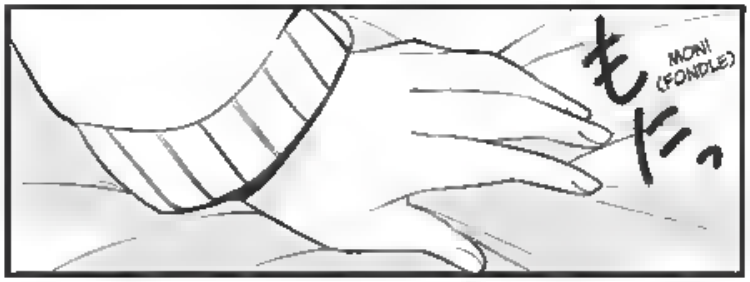
GUU
GUU (SNORE)
KOJOU.
PACHI (BLINK)
HNH?
.....?
JI (STARE)
WAKE UP ALREADY!
HOW LONG YOU GONNA SLEEP FOR?
BOYA (FUZZY)

Chapter 17:
A Maiden's Heart

GAH!
DON'T GO BACK TO SLEEP !!!
ゴロン...
GORON (ROLL)
.....
GEEZ... WHAT ARE YOU DOIN'?
DID YOU EAT SOMETHIN' WEIRD?
I DID NOT!
...JUST, I SAW ON THE NET THAT GUYS LIKE THIS SORT OF THING, SO...
KAAA (BLUSH)
I THINK THAT INFO'S A LITTLE OFF...


I'M NOT HEAVY !!
I THINK I'M THE BETTER JUDGE OF THAT HERE...


HUH!?
MOVE ALREADY, WOULDJA...? YOU'RE HEAVY.


MONI (FONDLE)

!?

?
WAI—
WHAT'S THIS? IT'S HARD...

...GEEZ, HOW RUDE! AND AFTER I WOKE YOU UP AND EVERY-THING.
I WAS GONNA MOVE WHETHER YOU SAID TO OR—

BO (BLUSH)
.....
DOSA (THUD)
KYA!
UWAH!
WHAT'RE YOU MAD AT ME FOR!? YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DECIDED TO CRAWL ALL OVER—
K... K-K-K-K-KOJOU!
IS SENPAI AWAKE, NAGISA-CHAN?
AH.
I GOTTA GET TO CHEER CLUB.
GACHA (RATTLE)
SORRY FOR MAKING YOU DO THIS, ASAGI-CHAN...
DID YOU GET KOJOU-KUN TO WAKE UP?
HYOKO (PEEK)
NAGISA-CHAN?
?
IS SOME-THING WRONG?

OW, OW...
UNGH...

...UM...
AH!
ER...

.....

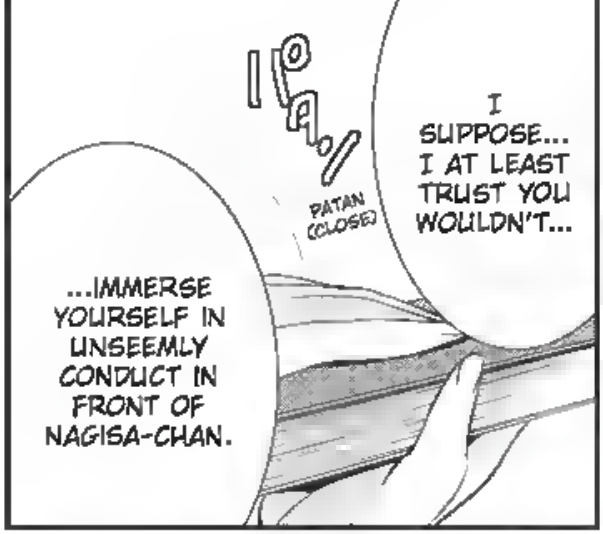
GLARE
AH!?
HEY, WAIT UP A SEC!
TAKE YOUR TIME...

...UM, COULD THAT BE...
...JEAL-OUSY?
NOT LIKELY.
BATAN! (SLAM)
HEY!
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE DATING OR ANYTHING.
SUTA (MARCH)
SUTA
YUKINA, WAIT UP—
SUTA
RIGHT...
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE DATING OR ANYTHING...
WHAT KIND OF GIRL IS SHE, ANYWAY?
SHE'S JUST WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE.
MEANING?
ER... MEANING... EXACTLY... WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE?

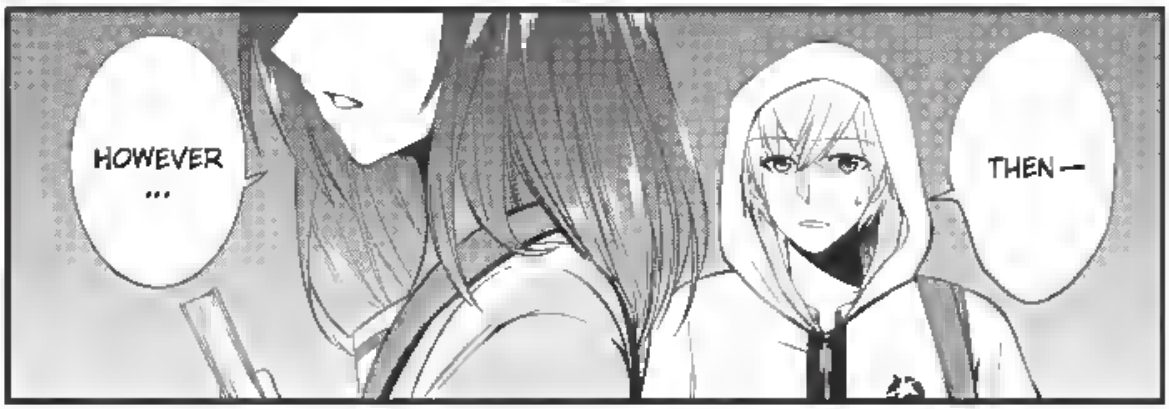
EH!? WH-WHY WOULD YOU ASK SOMETHING LIKE THAT...?
HM... KOJOU, ARE YOU HIDING SOMETHING FROM ME?
MAYBE THAT GIRL HAS SOMETHING ON YOU...?
EVEN MOTOKI'S ON THE MONEY SOMETIMES...
Maybe she's got something on him...
You'll just have to seduce it out of him!
NO REASON...
THAT'S NOT A DENIAL...
I REALLY DO...
...HAVE TO GO.
SORRY...
SU (GHP)

...I WONDER...
EH HEH...
A DECLARATION OF WAR, PERHAPS?
WHAT'D YOU REALLY COME FOR ANYWAY...?
JI (STARE)
HUH? THE HECK?

!
YO! HIMERAGI.
SU (SHF)
WHAT IS IT, AKATSUKI-SENPA!-WHO-FOOLS-AROUND-WITH-HIS-CLASSMATES-FIRST-THING-IN-THE-MORNING?


I SUPPOSE... I AT LEAST TRUST YOU WOULDN'T...
PATAN (CLOSE)
...IMMERSE YOURSELF IN UNSEEMLY CONDUCT IN FRONT OF NAGISA-CHAN.

ASAGI DID ALL THAT ON HER OWN...
SHE'S ALWAYS PLAYIN' PRANKS.


HOWEVER ...
THEN—

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF YOU HAD BEEN OVERCOME BY VAMPIRIC URGES?
UH...

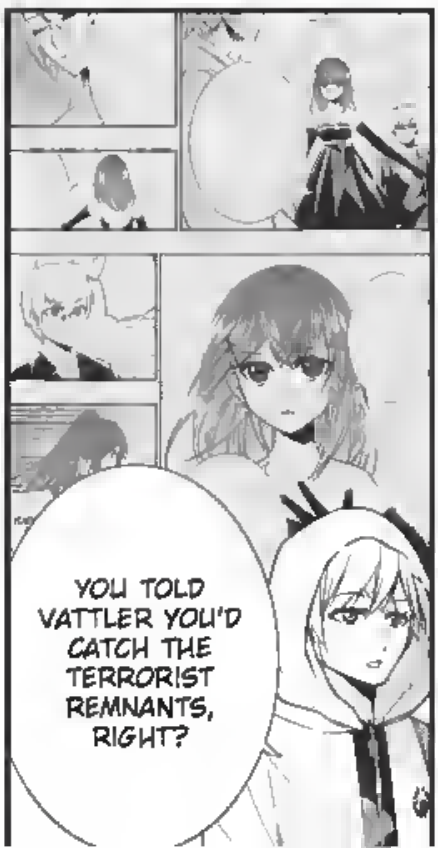
KI (GLARE)
...I DO NOT THINK YOU COULD HAVE RESISTED HER SEDUCTIONS.
SEDUC-TIONS?

PLEASE REFLECT SO THAT YOU DO NOT WIND UP IN SUCH A DANGEROUS SITUATION AGAIN.
ER... BUT THIS MORNING WAS...

REFLECT ON THAT.
YOU NEED TO REMAIN ON YOUR GUARD, SENPAI!

BOSO (MUTTER)
...STUPID SENPAI...

HMPH.
ZUUUN (GLOOM)
... OKAY ...

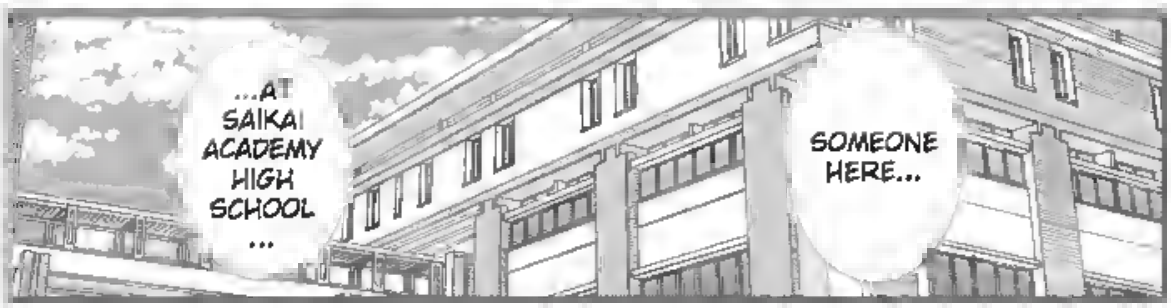

YOU TOLD VATTLER YOU'D CATCH THE TERRORIST REMNANTS, RIGHT?

ABOUT WHAT?

...COME TO THINK OF IT...

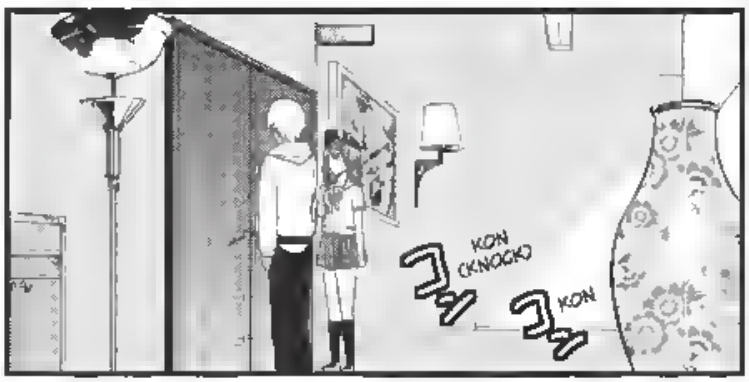
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?

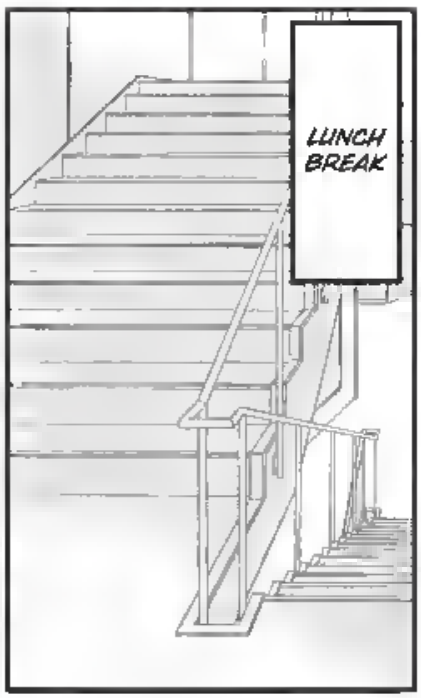
...THERE'S SOMEONE YOU CAN GO TO?
YES.
FIRST, I'LL GATHER MORE DETAILS...
...FROM SOMEONE WITH GREATER ACCESS TO INFORMATION.


...AT SAIKAI ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL ...
SOMEONE HERE...

HIGHER THAN THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE...
TOP FLOOR ...?

SIGN: OFFICE


KON (KNOCK)
KON

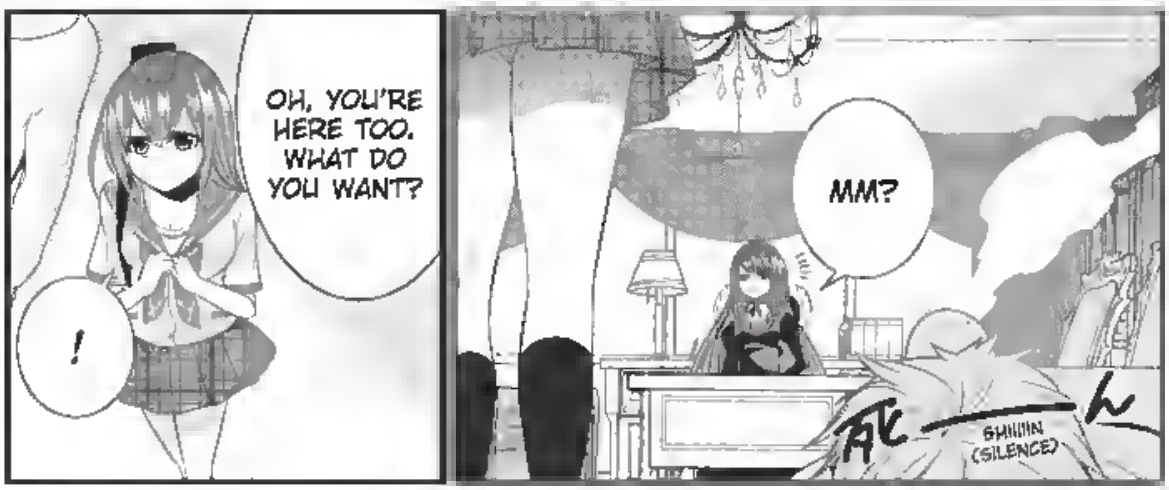

LUNCH BREAK

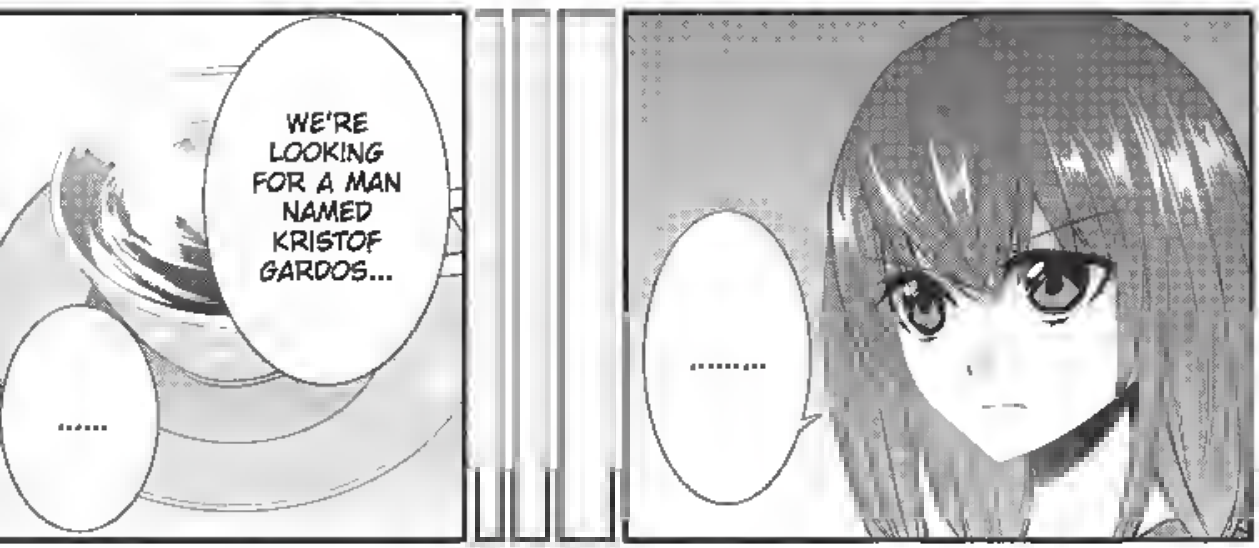
GACHA
GOT A MINUTE?
HEY, NATSUKI-CHAN?

GRFF!
GON
!?

HMPH.

SARA (SWISH)
HAVEN'T I TOLD YOU TIME AND TIME AGAIN NOT TO CALL ME "NATSUKI-CHAN"?
LEARN ALREADY...


OH, YOU'RE HERE TOO. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
!
MM?
SHIIIN (SILENCE)


WE'RE LOOKING FOR A MAN NAMED KRISTOF GARDOS...
.....
.....

YOU KNOW HIM, RIGHT?
FROM DIMITRIE VATTLER.
WHERE DID YOU HEAR THAT NAME?
STICKING HIS NOSE WHERE IT'S NOT WANTED..
GACHAN (CLATTER)
TCH...THAT FOPPISH SNAKE CHARMER ...
WHERE IS HE? COULD YOU PLEASE TELL US?
PER-HAPS.
SOUNDS LIKE YOU KNOW WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR.

I WILL CATCH GARDOS ...
...BEFORE HE MAKES CONTACT WITH DUKE ARDEAL.
GU (SQUEEZE)
...IF I TELL YOU, THEN WHAT?
WHA...!?
EH...?
I APOLOGIZE FOR THE DELAY.

YOUR TEA...
ASTARTE!?
...IS READY.
PEKO (BOW)
ACCEPT.
FIX ME A CUP OF THAT NEW BLACK TEA.
AHH, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU BOTH KNOW HER.
ARTIFICIAL LIFE-FORM ASTARTE HAS BEEN GIVEN THREE YEARS' PROBATION.
AS AN ATTACK MAGE AND A TEACHER, I'M PERFECT TO TAKE CUSTODY OF HER.
ER...
...WHAT'S SHE DOIN' HERE?
THEY DON'T NEED ANY TEA, ASTARTE.

IT'S OBVIOUS THAT'S THE REAL REASON...
BESIDES, I WAS IN THE MARKET FOR A LOYAL MAID...

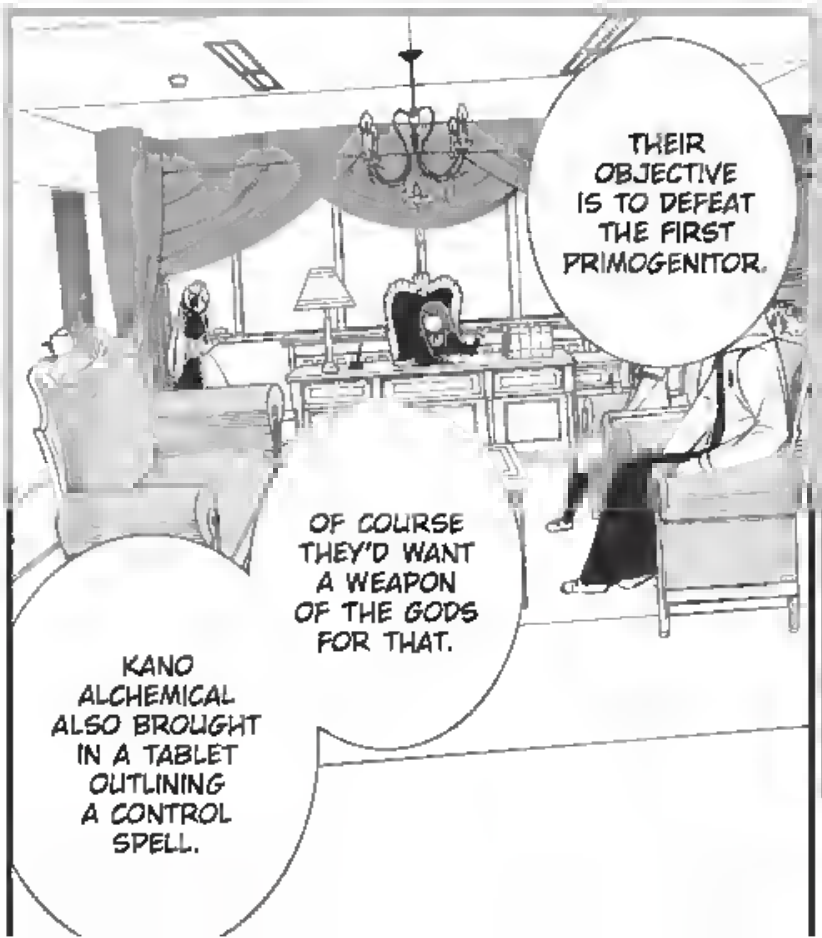
BATAN (SHUT)
EH?
YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW.

SO... GARDOS'S WHERE-ABOUTS?

BESIDES, THE ANCIENT WEAPON THEY'RE DEPENDING ON ISN'T USABLE.
ANCIENT WEAPON?

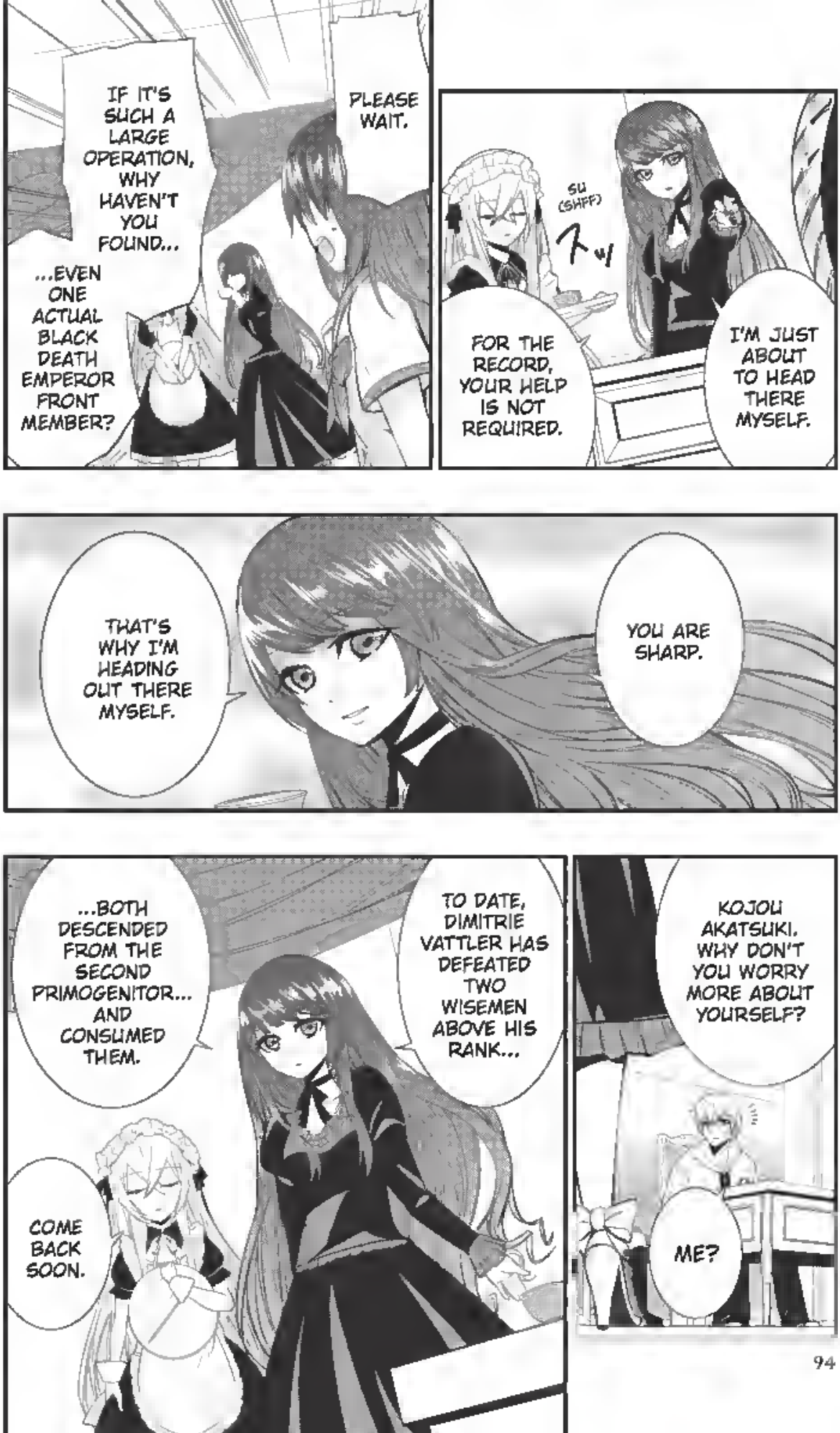
I'M SAYING, YOU DON'T NEED TO CAPTURE HIM.
VATTLER'S A MONSTER, THE NEAREST THING TO A PRIMOGENITOR. THEY CAN'T TOUCH HIM ANYWAY.

NALAKU-VERA.
SAID TO BE A WEAPON OF THE GODS THAT LAID COUNTLESS CITIES AND CULTURES TO WASTE.
A COMPANY CALLED KANO ALCHEMICAL APPARENTLY SMUGGLED IN A SAMPLE UNCOVERED IN AN ANCIENT RUIN.


THEIR OBJECTIVE IS TO DEFEAT THE FIRST PRIMOGENITOR.
OF COURSE THEY'D WANT A WEAPON OF THE GODS FOR THAT.
KANO ALCHEMICAL ALSO BROUGHT IN A TABLET OUTLINING A CONTROL SPELL.

SMUGGLED...? YOU THINK THE TERRORISTS ARE HERE FOR THAT...?

OH NO...
WHO KNOWS... THEY'VE ALREADY STOLEN IT.
WHERE IS THE NALAKUVERA NOW?
A BUNCH OF TERRORISTS WON'T GET ANYWHERE WITH IT
NO NEED FOR CONCERN. LINGUISTS AND SORCERERS THE WORLD OVER HAVE FAILED TO DECIPHER IT.
WE RECEIVED A REPORT INDICATING THEY MIGHT BE HIDING ON ONE OF THE SUB-FLOATS.
...THERE'S ALSO NO SIGN THEY'VE SMUGGLED THE NALAKUVERA OUT.
WE'VE ALREADY ARRESTED LAB TECHS WHO WERE HELPING THEM WITH IT...

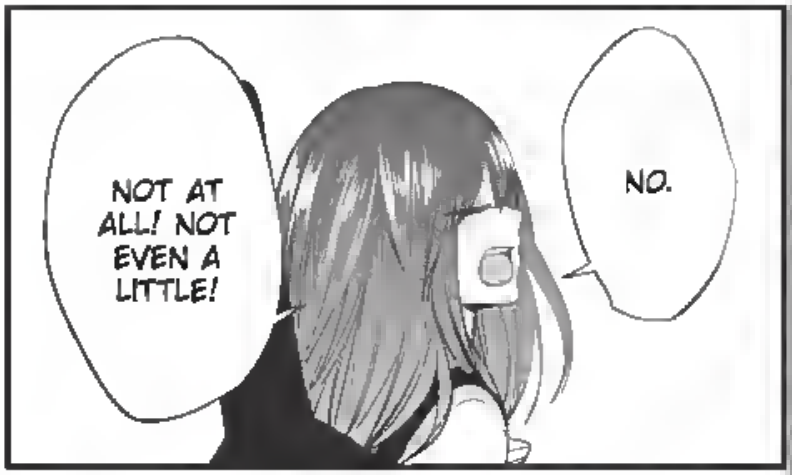

PLEASE WAIT.
IF IT'S SUCH A LARGE OPERATION, WHY HAVEN'T YOU FOUND...
...EVEN ONE ACTUAL BLACK DEATH EMPEROR FRONT MEMBER?
SU (SHFF)
I'M JUST ABOUT TO HEAD THERE MYSELF.
FOR THE RECORD, YOUR HELP IS NOT REQUIRED.
YOU ARE SHARP.
THAT'S WHY I'M HEADING OUT THERE MYSELF.
TO DATE, DIMITRIE VATTLER HAS DEFEATED TWO WISEMEN ABOVE HIS RANK...
...BOTH DESCENDED FROM THE SECOND PRIMOGENITOR... AND CONSUMED THEM.
COME BACK SOON.
KOJOU AKATSUKI. WHY DON'T YOU WORRY MORE ABOUT YOURSELF?
ME?

SHUN (RIPPLE)
AT THE VERY LEAST, SEE THAT HE DOES NOT CONSUME YOU.
.....
...SHE LEFT...
SO IF THE DUKE ATTACKED FOR REAL...
...WINNING WOULD BE TOUGH UNLESS I LEARN TO USE MY BEAST VASSALS A BIT BETTER.
SECOND PRIMO-GENITOR VAMPS, HUH...

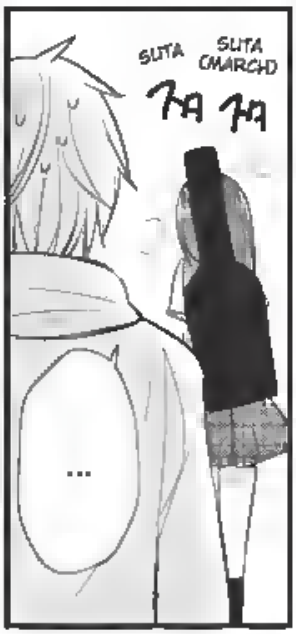
SENPAI.
MM?
.....
TA
...BEAST VASSALS ...HUH...
TA
TA (TAK)
ARE YOU SAYING...
...YOU WANT TO DO THAT AGAIN?
"THAT"...?
...YOU WANT TO...
...SUCK MY...
THAT.
YOU KNOW...

NOT EVEN A LITTLE...
IT'S NOT LIKE I WANT TO SUCK YOUR BLOOD, NOT EVEN A LITTLE...
VATTLER'S NOT PLANNIN' TO COME AT ME RIGHT AWAY ANYWAY, RIGHT?
A STRAIGHT-UP ATTACK MIGHT MAKE MY BEASTS RUN WILD...
EH? ER, NO.
WHEN I MEAN USE BEAST VASSALS, I DIDN'T MEAN THAT.
NOT THAT I CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT THAT!
ER... AH, WELL...
DAN
DAN
IF THEY RUN WILD, YOU MIGHT RACK UP TENS OF BILLIONS OF YEN MORE IN DAMAGES.
YOU MAY BE RIGHT.
DAN (STOMP?)

TSUUUN (SULK)
BUT EVEN IF HE DOESN'T CONSUME YOU...
...IT IS POSSIBLE HE MAY PURSUE A PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP. NOT THAT I CAN HELP, OF COURSE...


NO.
NOT AT ALL! NOT EVEN A LITTLE!

ERR...
HIMERAGI, ARE YOU... UPSET?

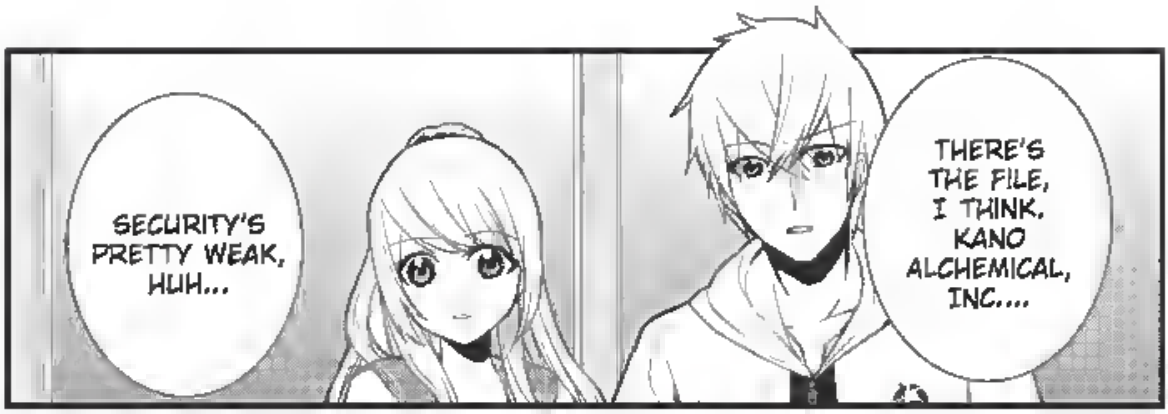

SUTA SUTA (MARCH)
...

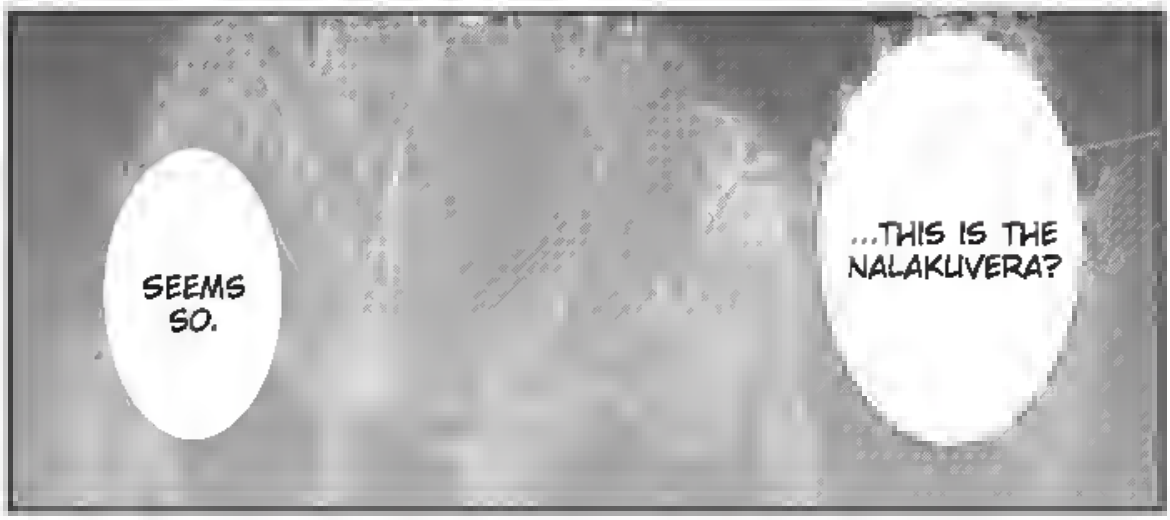
I DON'T GET HER...

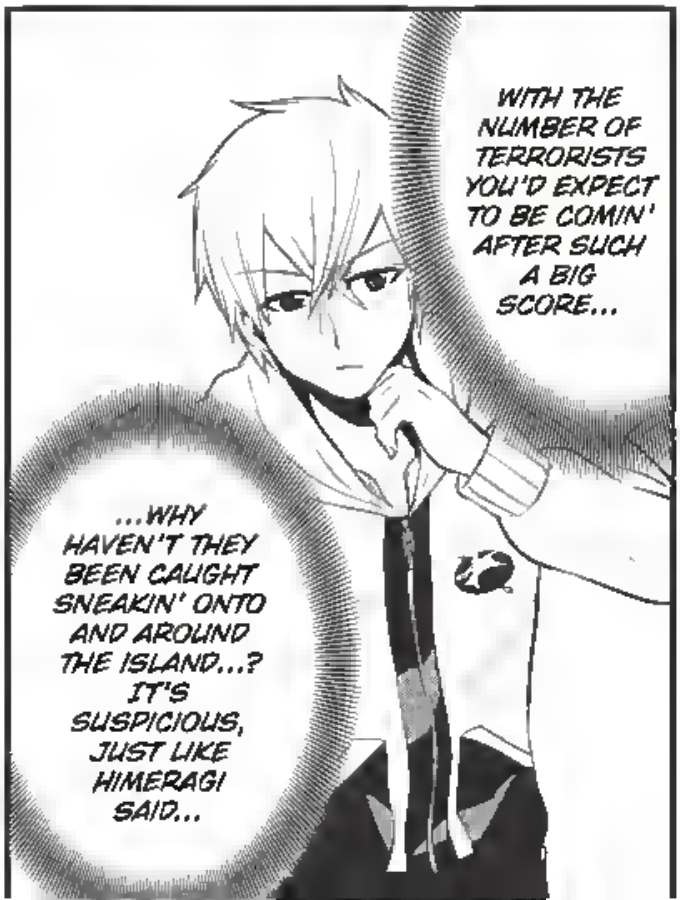
EH?
LOOK INTO?
I DON'T WANNA! SHE PUT YOU UP TO THIS, DIDN'T SHE?
PUH (SNUB)
YEAH, JUST FOR A BIT.
NALAKU-VERA?
WILL YOU PLEASE LET THAT GO AND LOOK UP THIS NALAKUVERA THING? PLEASE?

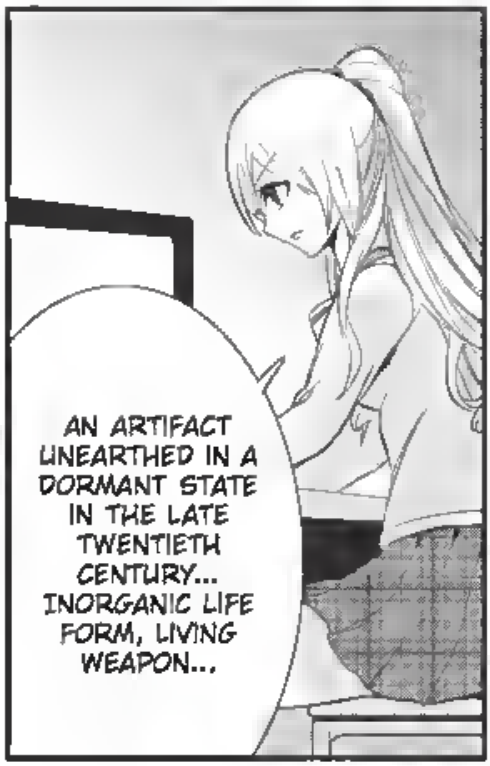
.....
...? YOU KNOW IT?
AH, ER, NO, BUT...
IT SOUNDS INTERESTING, SO I'LL PLAY ALONG.
REALLY!?
...FINE.
WELL, THEN...
SU (SHFF)

TH-THIS IS NOTHING.
KATA
KATA (TAPPA)
KATA
PI (BEEP)
POOON (GLOW)
YOU SURE ARE SOMETHIN', THOUGH... EVEN THE COMPUTERS IN THIS ROOM ARE LOCKED...

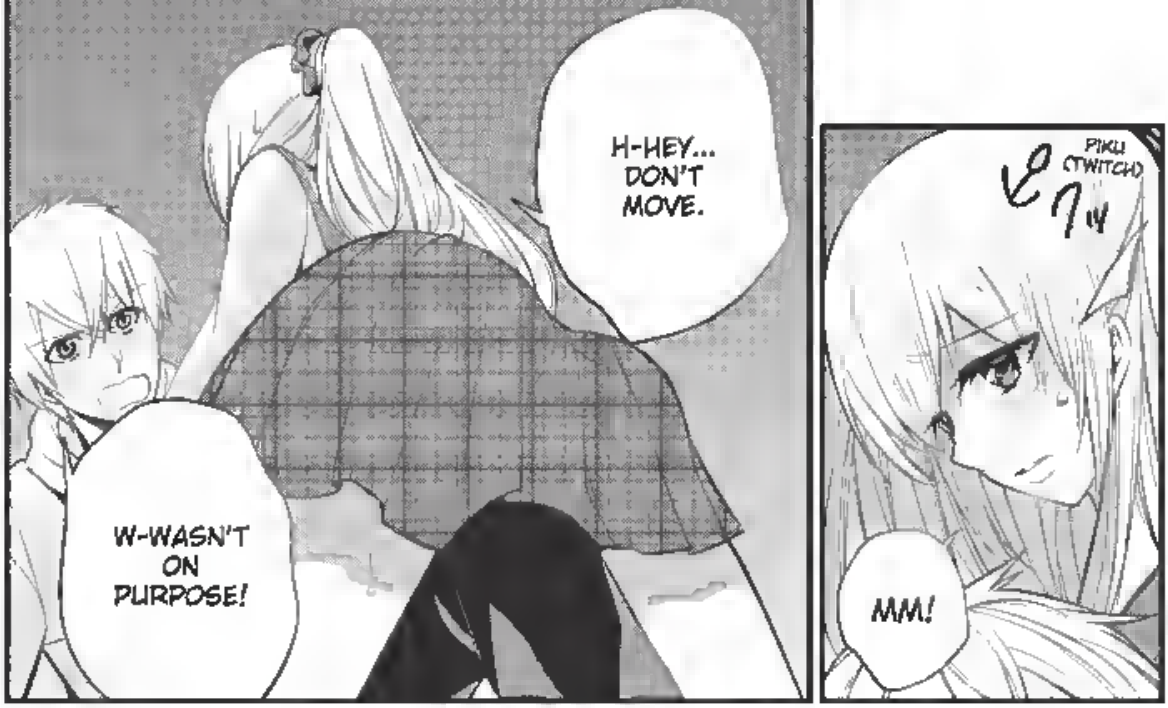

SECURITY'S PRETTY WEAK, HUH...
THERE'S THE FILE, I THINK. KANO ALCHEMICAL, INC....


SEEMS SO.
...THIS IS THE NALAKUVERA?


WITH THE NUMBER OF TERRORISTS YOU'D EXPECT TO BE COMIN' AFTER SUCH A BIG SCORE...
...WHY HAVEN'T THEY BEEN CAUGHT SNEAKIN' ONTO AND AROUND THE ISLAND...? IT'S SUSPICIOUS, JUST LIKE HIMERAGI SAID...


AN ARTIFACT UNEARTHED IN A DORMANT STATE IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY... INORGANIC LIFE FORM, LIVING WEAPON...

!!
PI (BEEP)
GACHA (KCHAK)
WHO IS IT...?
MATSUI, THE STUDENT ADVISOR.
GATA (RATTLE)
QUICK, HIDE!
UH-OH!
GATA
WHAT'LL WE DO?
JUST KEEP QUIET...


H-HEY... DON'T MOVE.
W-WASN'T ON PURPOSE!
PIKU (TWITCH)
MM!

IT'S A TIGHT SPACE! I CAN'T HELP IT!
GYUU
WHERE ARE YOU TOUCHING...?
YA!
GYUU (PRESS)

!
...THAT EARRING...

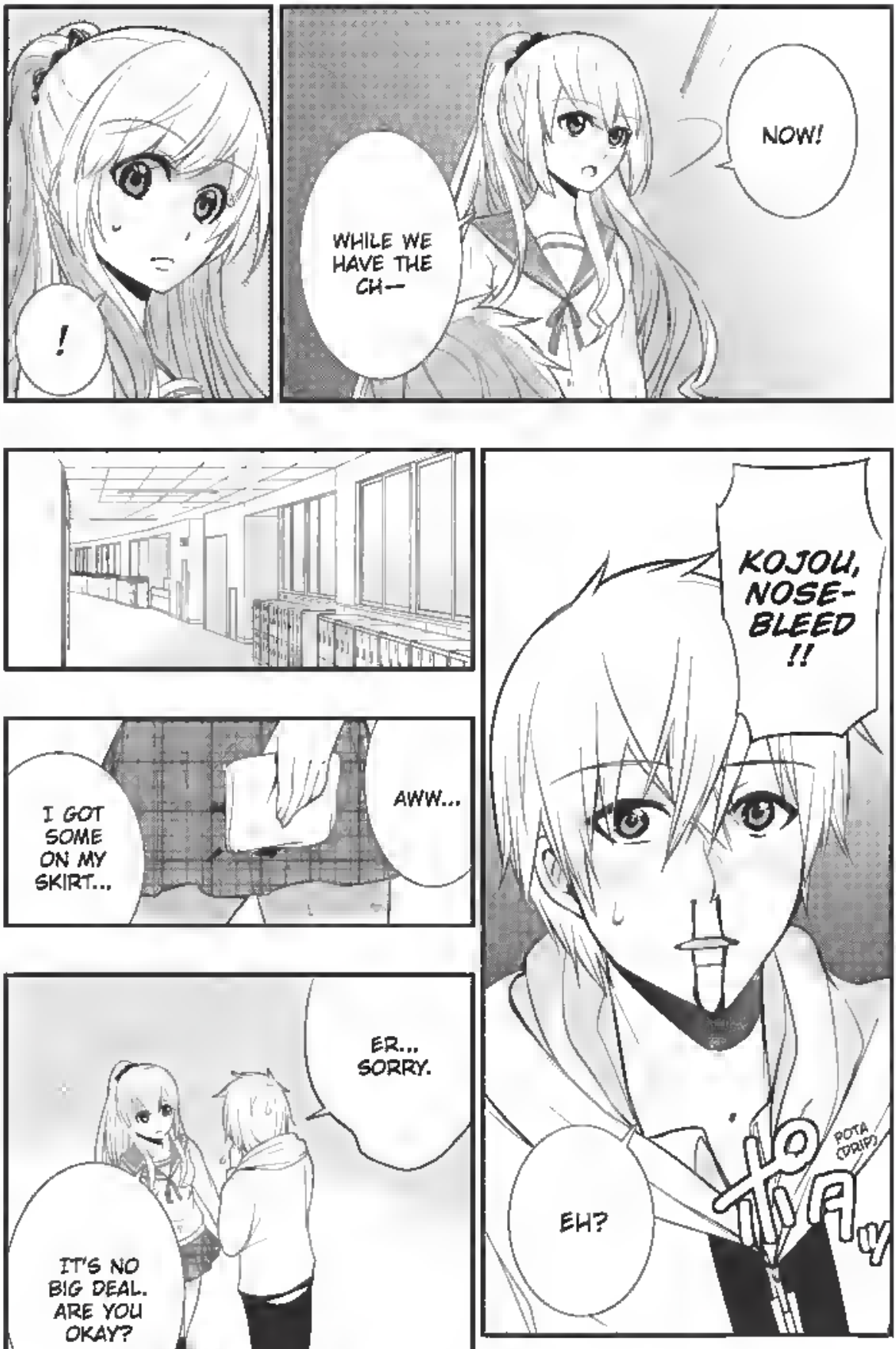
GOKU (GULP)

YOU SURE TOOK YOUR TIME NOTICING, STUPID KOJOU.

BATAN (SHUT)
...LOOKS LIKE HE LEFT.

LOOK GOOD ON ME, HUH?

THOSE ARE THE ONES I BOUGHT...
HEH HEH...


!
WHILE WE HAVE THE CH—
NOW!
KOJOU, NOSE-BLEED !!
EH?
POTA (DRIP)
AWW...
I GOT SOME ON MY SKIRT...
ER... SORRY.
IT'S NO BIG DEAL. ARE YOU OKAY?

CARD: OBSERVE

STRIKE THE BLOOD

DEFINITION

<<LOST WARLORD >>

One of the publicly-acknowledged Primogenitors, the pinnacles of vampirism, of which only three exist in the entire world. The First is a warlord served by 72 Beast Vassals. He rules the Dominion of the Night, the Warlord's Empire, with his overwhelming military might and has great influence upon the other Primogenitors. It is no exaggeration to say that his call was what that brought people together to sign the Holy Ground Treaty that permits humanity and demon-kind to peacefully coexist.

Chapter 18:
Assault

HOW'S THAT?
MM...
HAS THE NOSEBLEED STOPPED?
SA CTURNO
THANKS FOR HELPIN' ME OUT WITH IT.
IT-IT'S NOTHING.
YEAH... FINALLY.

WELL... NOTHING YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT.
TO CONTROL IT, YOU'D NEED TO USE THESE TABLETS, SEE, BUT NO ONE'S DECODED THE ANCIENT WRITING.
ANCIENT WRITING...
M-MORE IMPOR-TANTLY, WHAT WAS THAT?
THE RECORD SAID IT'S SOME ANCIENT RELIC.
AH... NO, NO. IT'S NOTHING.
SOMETHIN' WRONG?
SO IF SOMEONE DECODED IT, IT'D BE BAD?
MM? WELL... YEAH.
I'M GONNA GO BUY A DRINK.

...MAYBE I SHOULD JUST LEAVE IT LIKE NATSUKI-CHAN SAID...
MM...
WHAT'S WITH ASAGI ALL OF A SUDDEN?
SHE KNOW SOMETHIN' MAYBE?
CHIKA (GLINT)
GOOOOO (RRRUMBLE)
MM?

GOOO (WHOOSH)
ゴオオ..
TH...THE HECK!?
DOGYA (CRASH)
ドギャ
WHOA!!
DON (DOOM)

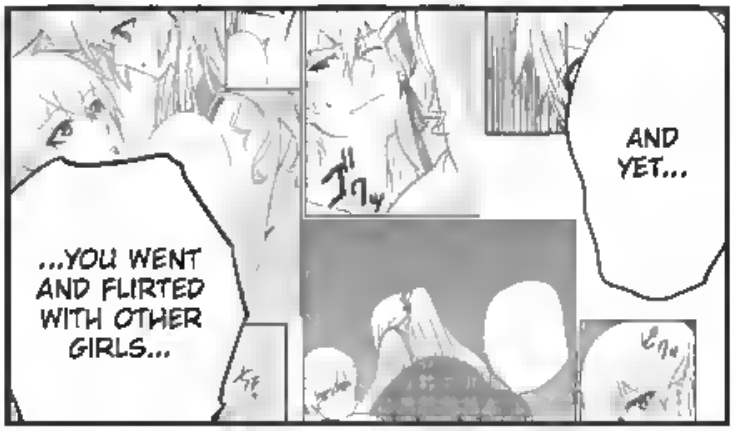
GOOO (RUMBLE)
HANGING AROUND MY YUKINA'S SKIRT AND SUCKING HER BLOOD...
BE SILENT, CRIMINAL!
YOU WERE ON THE SHIP...

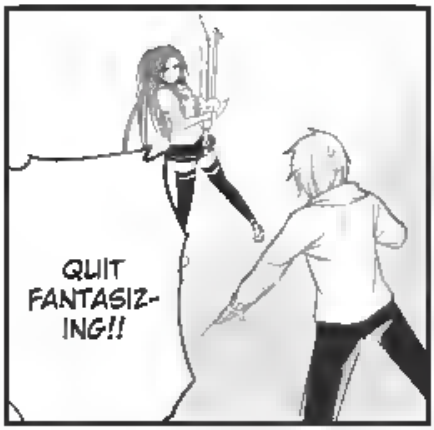
WAIT!! IT WAS AN EMERGENCY, COULDN'T BE H—
GIRAN (GLINT)
MAIMING THAT SWEET, ADORABLE GIRL'S NECK...!!

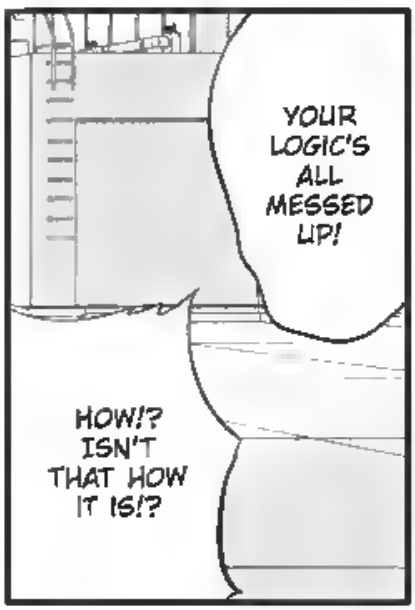
GYUN! (LUNGE)
DIE !!!
DA (LEAP)

WHY DID YOU DODGE THAT!?
GYUO (WHOOSH)
UWAH!
HOW DARE YOU HUMILIATE MY YUKINA!?
I TOLD YOU TO DIE, DIDN'T I!?
IF I HADN'T DODGED IT, I'D BE DEAD!!
YOU NUTS!?

NIBBLING ON IT...
RUNNING YOUR LIPS ACROSS HER NECK...
BREATHING ON IT...


...YOU WENT AND FLIRTED WITH OTHER GIRLS...
AND YET...


QUIT FANTASIZ-ING!!


YOUR LOGIC'S ALL MESSED UP!
HOW!? ISN'T THAT HOW IT IS!?

ERK...
A ROTTEN PERVERT FOURTH PRIMO-GENITOR LIKE YOU...
...IS NO PRIMO-GENITOR AT ALL!!

IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU, SHE WOULDN'T CONSTANTLY BE FACING SUCH DANGER.
GYU (GRIP)
YOUR EXISTENCE CAUSES YUKINA TO SUFFER.
...!
ZUKI (STING)
WHY SHOULD SHE BE FIGHTING THAT LOTHARINGIAN ARMED APOSTLE AND NOW THESE TERRORISTS...!!?
MY ONLY...
...FRIEND IN THE WHOLE WORLD ...!?
YOU HAVE A LITTLE SISTER, TWO PARENTS, AND LOTS OF FRIENDS AT SCHOOL...
YOU DON'T HAVE JUST THAT AIBA GIRL.
...AND YOU WANT TO TAKE YUKINA FROM ME!?

GOO (WHOOM)
...!
ZURA (SLICE)
PACHI (CRACKLE)
PO (DRIP)
ZAWA (SHUDDER)
NOT GOOD...
DOO (WHOOM)
!?

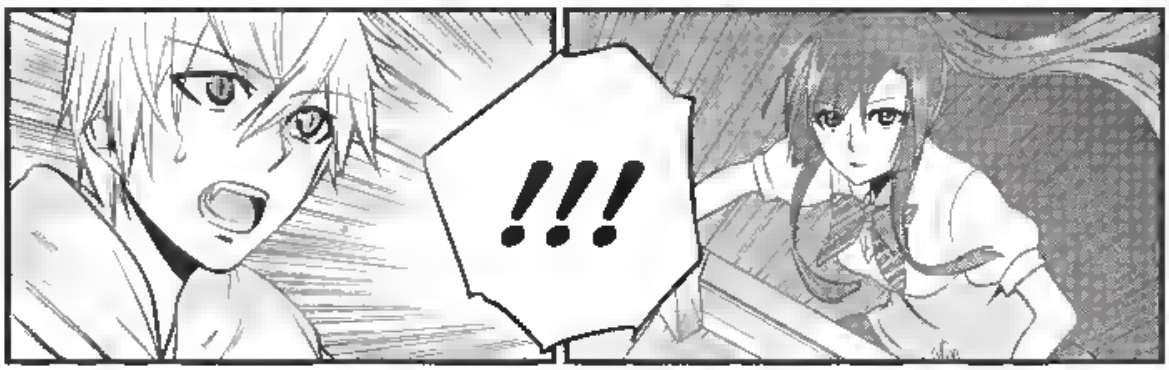
WH...
WHAT!?
KOJOU!
OOOOOOO
(RRRUMBLE)
NNH...
GH...
!
ASAGI
...

ASAGI, STAY BACK!!
HEY, YOU! WHAT ARE YOU...?
IS THAT SWORD REAL!?
TA (TMP)
?
DOKUN (THROB)
GH ...!
!!
KHHHH (SHINE)
GASHAN (SHATTER)
KYA!!
BAN (SLAM)

KIIIIII
GASHAN
WHOA!!
KYAA!
PARIN (CRACK)
EVERY-ONE CALM DOWN!
KYA!
HFF!
HFF!
TCH... THAT KOJOU...
BA (FWP)
OW!!
AT THIS RATE, THE BUILDING WILL COLLAPSE!
BIKI (CRACK)
BIKI
BIKI
BIKI
KOJOU AKA-TSUKI!!
CEASE THIS AT ONCE!!!

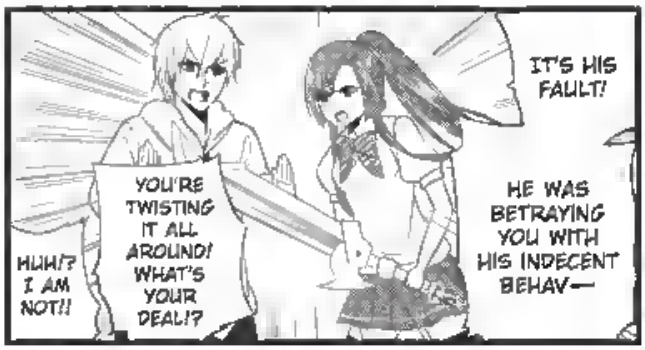
UNGH... ASAGI!!
GOOOOOO (RRRUMBLE)
ゴオオオオオ

...BESEECH THEE!
I, MAIDEN OF THE LION, SWORD SHAMAN OF THE HIGH GOD...


!!!

KA (SHINE)
O DIVINE WOLF OF THE SNOW DRIFT...
BA (LEAP)
...LET THE ECHOES OF THY THOUSAND HOWLS BECOME A SHIELD...
...AND REPEL THIS CALAMITY!
PAKIN (CRACK)

KA
(FLASH)
GAKU
(SLUMP)
S...
SAVED
...


IT'S HIS FAULT!
HE WAS BETRAYING YOU WITH HIS INDECENT BEHAV—
YOU'RE TWISTING IT ALL AROUND! WHAT'S YOUR DEAL!?
HUH!? I AM NOT!!

WHAT ARE THE TWO OF YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?

SAYAKA.
Y-YUKINA!?

MUSU (SUCK)
レスッ
WATCHING THE FOURTH PRIMO-GENITOR IS MY MISSION.
DO YOU WISH TO INTERFERE WITH THAT, SAYAKA?

HAAH!
HFF!
HAFF!

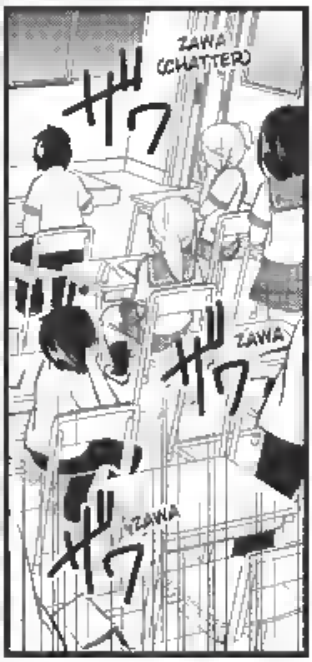
AND SENPAI...
GYU... (SQUEEZE)
FURU (TREMBLE)
FURU
FURU
MMNH!!
DO YOU TRUST ME SO LITTLE?
...WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOUR BEAST VASSAL RAN AMOK AND HARMED AIBA-SENPAI?
AH! HERE YOU ARE.
.....!

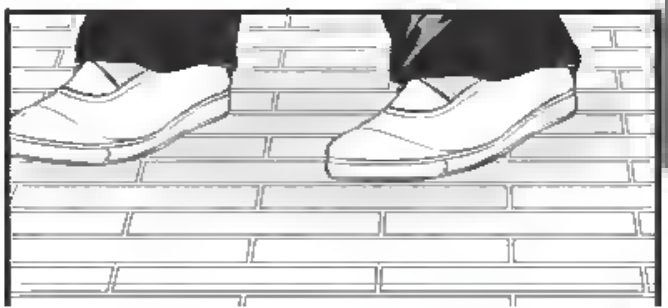
ASAGI-CHAN!?
EH!?
YUKINA! YOU RAN OUT SO FAST—ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!?
AND THE SCHOOL LOST POWER TOO...
I'LL TAKE AIBA-SENPAI TO THE CLINIC.
SENPAI, TAKE SNOWDRIFT WOLF.
KIN (PLINK)
EH...? TOGETHER?
BOTH OF YOU.
PLEASE REFLECT ON YOUR ACTIONS.

GOOOOO (RUMBLE)
IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH THAT?

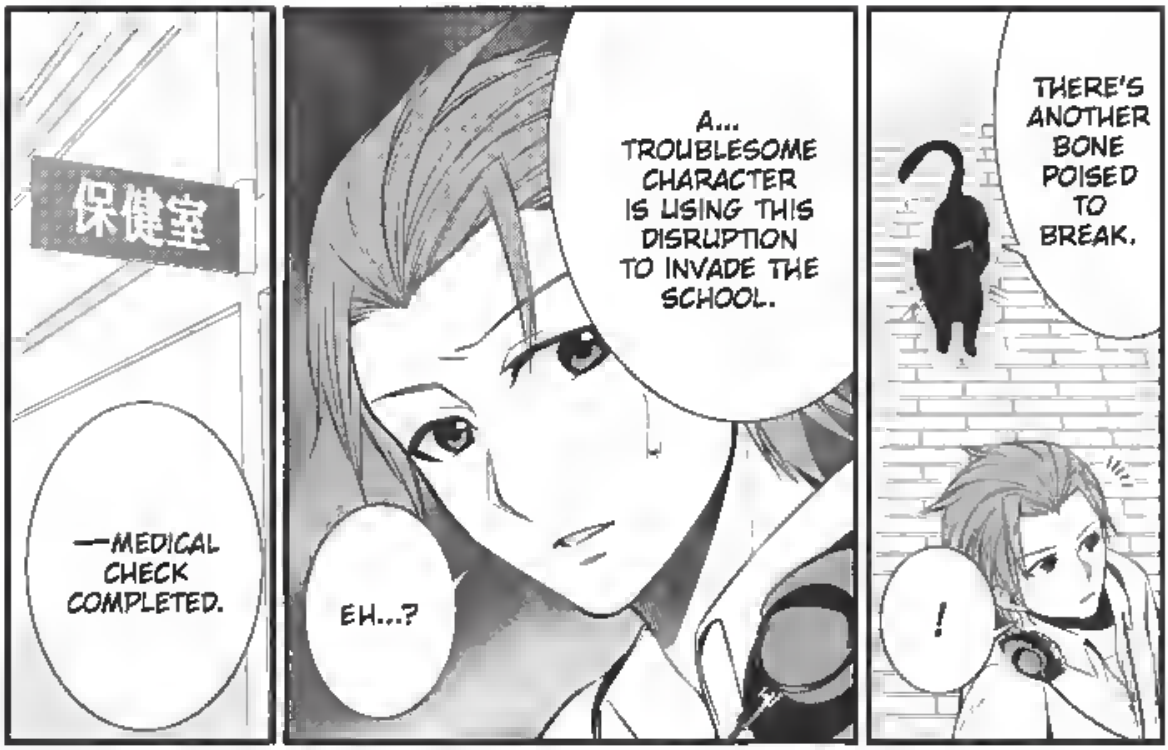
N... NO...

DO NOT LEAVE UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO DO SO!


ZAWA (CHATTER)
ZAWA
ZAWA



MY SOUNDSCAPE'S A WRECK THANKS TO YOU!
AW... CRAP.
KOJOU, YOU BASTARD, GOING WILD HERE OF ALL PLACES!
BUT I SUPPOSE THIS IS ACCORDING TO PLAN TOO?
HMPH... YEAH.
WATCHING HIM IS BONE-BREAKING WORK.
HEH!
THE FOURTH PRIMOGENITOR IS HARD ON ALL HIS WATCHERS...

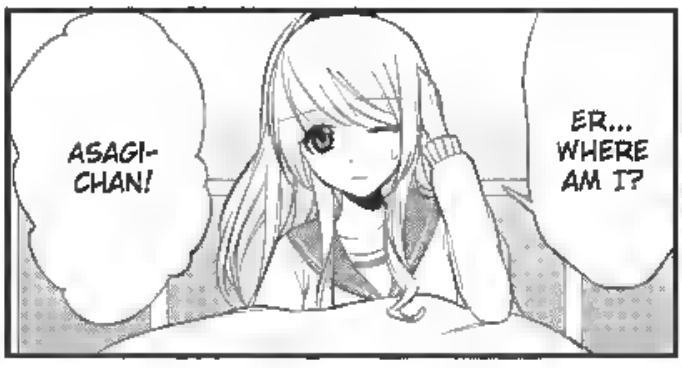

保健室
—MEDICAL CHECK COMPLETED.
EH...?
A... TROUBLESOME CHARACTER IS USING THIS DISRUPTION TO INVADE THE SCHOOL.
!
THERE'S ANOTHER BONE POISED TO BREAK.

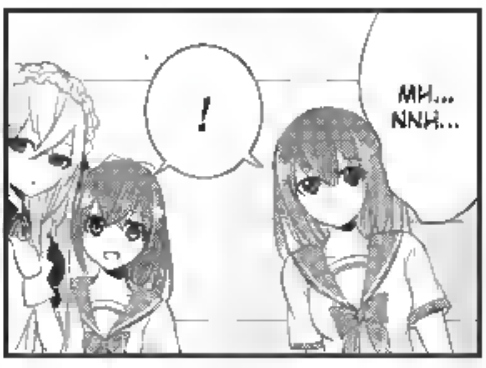
SIGN: CLINIC

...BROUGHT ON BY THE SHOCKWAVE AND SUDDEN CHANGE IN AIR PRESSURE.
DIAGNOSIS IS MINOR SHOCK...

HO (RELIEF)
I'M SO GLAD...
HOWEVER, I RECOMMEND REST AND QUIET FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY.
THERE IS NO LIKELIHOOD OF LONG-TERM EFFECTS.

SFX: NADE (PET) NADE





LOOKS LIKE A ROOF PIPE EXPLODED, AND YOU GOT CAUGHT IN IT!
I DID HEAR THIS HIGH-PITCHED SOUND...
PIPE?
ASAGI-CHAN, YOU'RE AWAKE!
DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
HOW MANY FINGERS DO YOU SEE?
DOES IT HURT ANYWHERE!?
IT'S TOUGH GETTING GRILLED SO SOON AFTER WAKING UP...
KUWA (CROWD)
I'M SORRY, AIBA-SENPAI. SHE'S A FRIEND OF MINE.
!
SOME WEIRD GIRL WITH A SWORD WAS...
...CHASING AFTER KOJOU-KUN UP THERE...
BA (FLASH)

JEAL-OUS?
THAT'S... I THINK... SHE MIGHT BE JEALOUS OF AKATSUKI-SENPAI...
.....
FRIEND?
WHY WAS SHE ATTACKING KOJOU?
HUH? WHAT THE HECK?
TH-THAT TOO MIGHT HAVE CONTRIBUTED, I BELIEVE...
WHAT, BECAUSE I WAS WITH KOJOU?
THAT'S...
(GLARE)
WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU HAVE WITH KOJOU?
...LOOK THIS HAS BEEN BUGGING ME FOR A WHILE, SO LET'S JUST GET IT OUT THERE.

WARNING.
I HAVE DETECTED INTRUDERS WITHIN THE SCHOOL.
GOOOO (WHOOOOH)
TWO INTRUDERS. BASED ON THEIR MOVEMENTS AND SPEED...
IN-TRUD-ERS?
KATA
KATA (TRMBL)
NO WAY...
...I DEDUCE THAT THEY ARE UNREGISTERED DEMONS.
.....
PREDICTED DESTINATION POINT...
WHERE ARE THEY HEADED?

WHA ...!?
...CURRENT LOCATION— SAIKAI ACADEMY CLINIC.
THEY'RE NOT AFTER SENPAI!?
GYU (SQUEEZE)
BURU
YUKINA-CHAN... I'M SCARED.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, I'M RIGHT HERE.
BURU (SHIVER)
BURU
BA! (BOLT)
I DON'T REALLY GET WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT LET'S RUN FOR IT.
IT'S BETTER THAN STAYING HERE!
GARA (SLIDE)
!!
BURU
BURU

JIRI (TENSE)
.....!
GIRA (GLARE)
A DIFFICULT FIGHT..
AGAINST A BEAST-MAN, PROTECTING THREE, NO SNOW-DRIFT WOLF...
...
GYU (SQUEEZE)
...WHAT SHOULD I...?
FOUND THEM GRIGORI?
IT'S ONE OF THE THREE HUMANS COLONEL
THERE'S A HOMUNCULUS TOO

JAPANESE FACES ALL LOOK ALIKE TO ME...
WELL, WE CAN TAKE THEM ALL AND USE THEM AS HOSTAGES AND BARGAINING CHIPS...
I DON'T REALLY WANT TO HURT YOU, SO...
...YOU'LL BEHAVE, WON'T YOU?
BA (LEAP)
...SPECIAL EXCEPTION #2, BASIC SELF-DEFENSE INVOKED...
HOMUNCULUS GUARDIANSHIP REGULATIONS...
GASHA (CRASH)
KA (SHINE)
EXECUTE, "RHODODAK—"

KHFF!
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO (BLAM)
DON
DO
A SELF-DEFENSE SYSTEM, PERHAPS?
SORRY, I SENSED ODD DEMONIC ENERGY FROM THIS DOLL...
NO!!
DOSA (PLOP)
(SU (SHFF)
APOLO-GIES...
...FOR THE LATE INTRO-DUCTION.
WHO...
...WHO THE HELL ARE YOU!?

MY NAME IS KRISTOF GARDOS...
...A FORMER SOLDIER OF THE WARLORD'S EMPIRE, NOW A REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVIST.
SOME WOULD CALL ME A TERRORIST.

...ONE OF YOU TO DO A LITTLE JOB FOR ME..
I'VE COME HERE TO ASK...

STRIKE THE BLOOD

DEFINITION

<< BLACK DEATH EMPEROR FRONT >>

Beast-man supremacist terrorists from the Warlord's Empire that seek the destruction of the Holy Ground Treaty and the First Primogenitor who assisted in the treaty's creation. Its founder, the Black Death Emperor, was a beast-man necromancer but is already dead. They are currently led by the Black Death Emperor's former comrade in arms, Kristof Gardos.

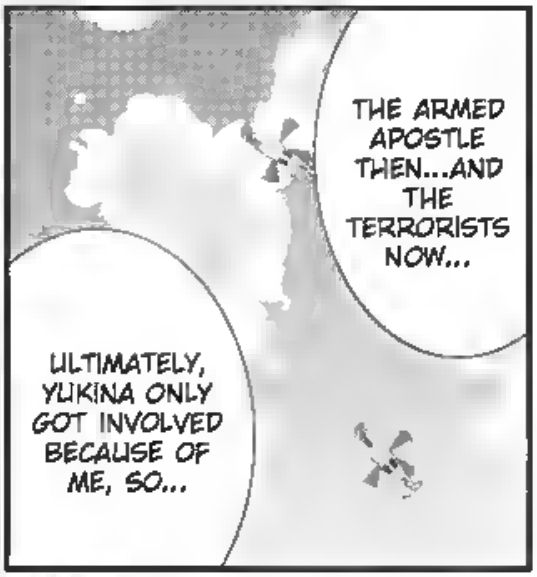
Chapter 19:
The First Words

.....
HEY.
HOW LONG DO WE HAVE TO STAY LIKE THIS?
PICHICHI (CHIRRUP)
UNTIL YUKINA COMES BACK, I SHOULD THINK.
WHAT IS IT?

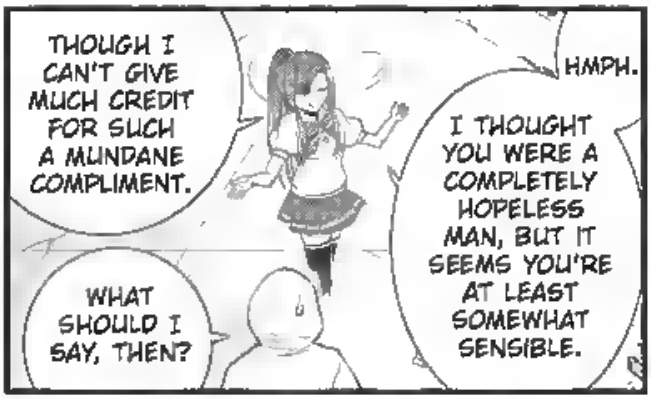
GABA (LURCH)
LIKE THAT CAN HAPPEN!! WHADDAYA THINK A VAMPIRE IS!?
I'LL GET PREGNANT JUST BREATHING THE AIR.
KI (GLARE)
JUST TO MAKE IT CLEAR, I DON'T WANT TO SPEND EVEN A SINGLE MOMENT...
...WITH AN INDECENT MAN LIKE YOU!
CROSS THAT LINE, AND I'LL ASSASSINATE YOU, RIGHT BEFORE I SLAUGHTER YOU!!
NOOOO!! STAY BACK!
AHH!!
KYAAA!!
THAT'S KILLING ME TWICE!!
...UM...
GAKU (SLUMP)
PUI (SNUB)
SHUT UP! YOU DRANK MY YUKINA'S BLOOD!
.....
YOU DRANK MY YUKINA'S BLOOD!!

HUH?
...BUT YOU'RE RIGHT THAT A LOT OF WHAT'S GONE DOWN IS MY FAULT, SO... SORRY...

LET ME MAKE IT CLEAR TO YOU: YUKINA IS JUST EXECUTING HER MISSION.
HMPH!
ADMITTING IT SO EASILY MAKES IT SOUND LIKE YOU TAKE PRIDE IN IT.
SHE BEARS NO CONCERN FOR WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU.


THE ARMED APOSTLE THEN...AND THE TERRORISTS NOW...
ULTIMATELY, YUKINA ONLY GOT INVOLVED BECAUSE OF ME, SO...

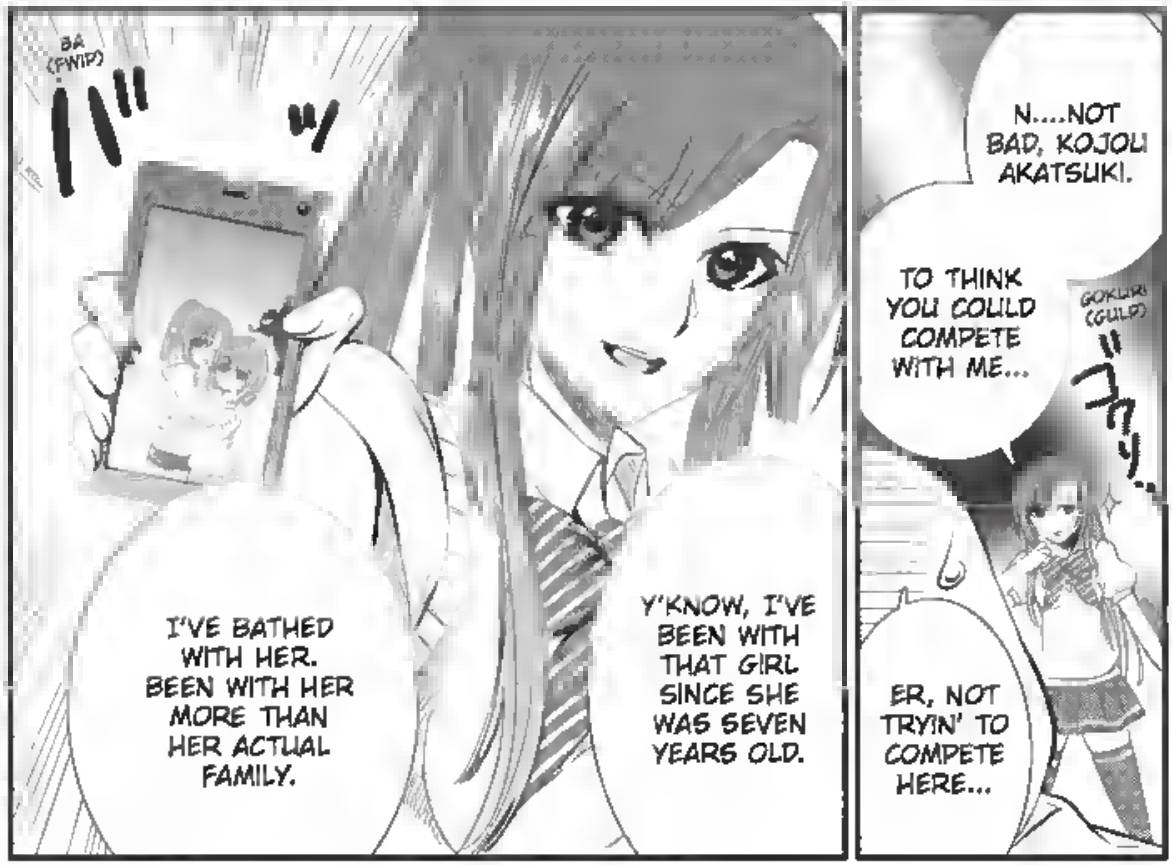
YOU'RE CERTAINLY AN ODD VAMPIRE...
I WOULDN'T THINK ONE IN YOUR POSITION WOULD THANK THE ONE WATCHING HIM.
BUT SHE DID SAVE ME...
SHUN GOROO?
.....

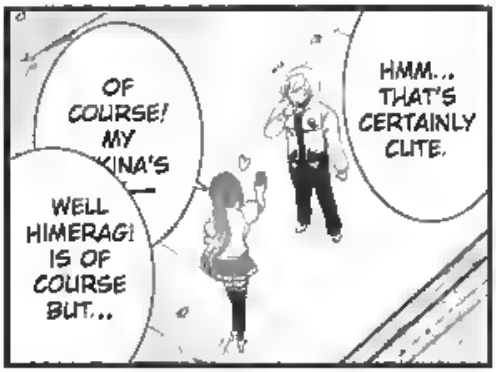

THOUGH I CAN'T GIVE MUCH CREDIT FOR SUCH A MUNDANE COMPLIMENT.
HMPH.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A COMPLETELY HOPELESS MAN, BUT IT SEEMS YOU'RE AT LEAST SOMEWHAT SENSIBLE.
WHAT SHOULD I SAY, THEN?

KIRA (GLINT)
KIRA
SOME-THING ABOUT...
...FAIR SKIN, GOLDEN PEACH FUZZ, SHOULDER BLADES LIKE ANGEL WINGS... ♡
UTTORI (SWOOND)
うっとり
THAT'S ALL APPEARANCE. AIN'T THERE OTHER STUFF?

YEAH, BUT HIMERAGI'S A GOOD PERSON.

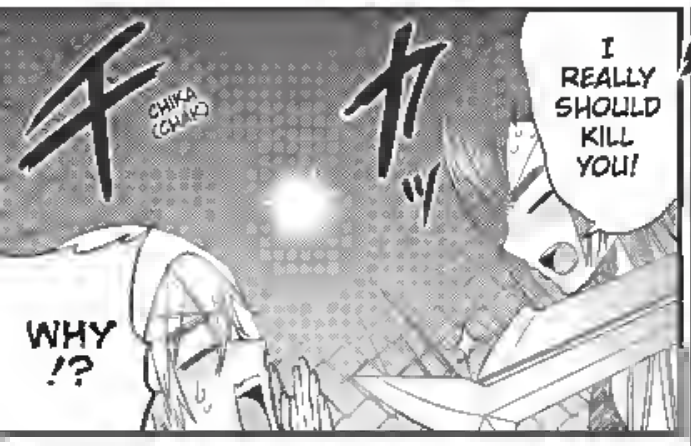
I MEAN, HER PERSONALITY. LIKE...
...!
....SHE'S SO SERIOUS, WORKS SO HARD, SHY BUT HELPS OTHERS... STUFF.
MOSO (NUZZLE)
MOSO
OH YES... LIKE THE LINGERING SCENT WHEN I SNUCK INTO YUKINA'S BED...
ガサゴソ GASA (RUSTLE) GOSO
WHO COMPLIMENTS SOMEONE'S SCENT...?


BA (FWIP)
I'VE BATHED WITH HER. BEEN WITH HER MORE THAN HER ACTUAL FAMILY.
Y'KNOW, I'VE BEEN WITH THAT GIRL SINCE SHE WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD.
N....NOT BAD, KOJOU AKATSUKI.
TO THINK YOU COULD COMPETE WITH ME...
GOKURI (GULP)
ER, NOT TRYIN' TO COMPETE HERE...

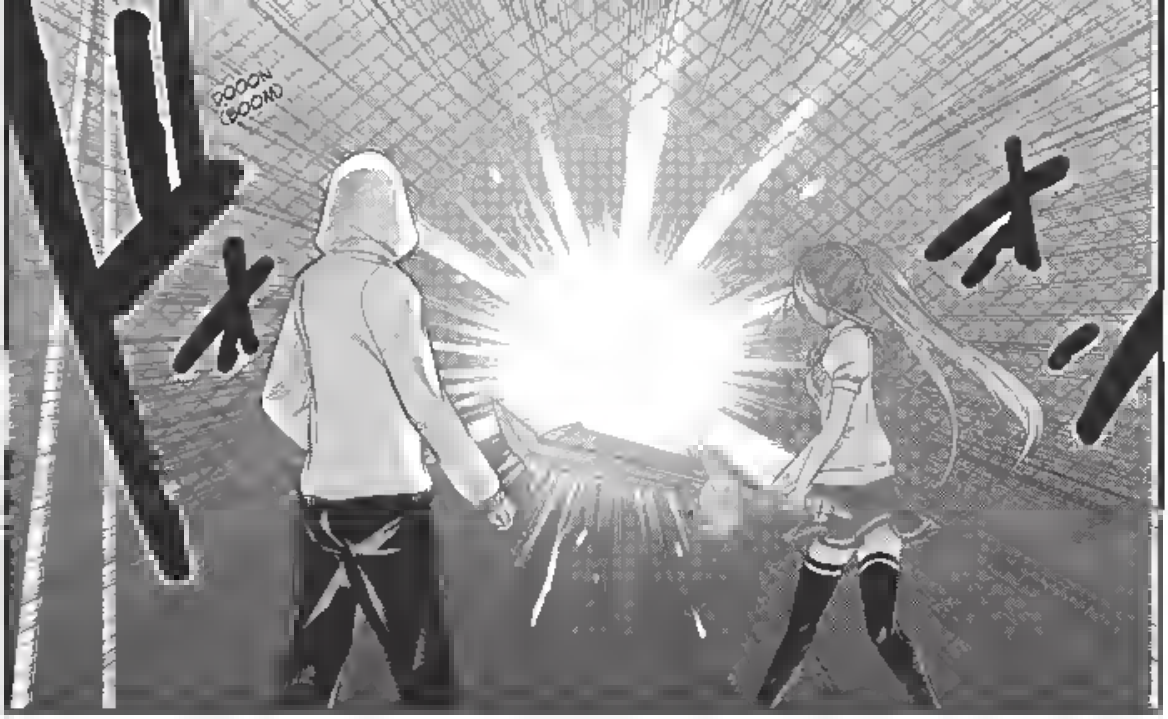

HMM... THAT'S CERTAINLY CUTE.
OF COURSE! MY KINA'S
WELL HIMERAGI IS OF COURSE BUT...

SHE'S AN ANGEL, ISN'T SHE?

...YOU TURNED INTO A...
...REAL LOOKER SINCE THEN, HUH?


CHIKA (CHAK)
I REALLY SHOULD KILL YOU!
WHY !?

...WH...
BO! (BLUSH)
WHAAAAT?


DOOON (BOOM)

GOOOO (RUMB...)
WHAT WAS THAT!?
!!?

A SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE? BUT USING ONE IN AN URBAN AREA...
TO TAKE DOWN A HELI IN ONE SHOT...

LOOKS LIKE A CHOPPER GOT SHOT DOWN...
AN ACCIDENT? OR MAYBE...

JUDGING BY THE ATTACK, IT CAME FROM THE SUB-FLOAT STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION !?
THE BLACK DEATH EMPER-OR FRONT !?

!
DA
DA
DA
DA
DA (TMP)
WHAT IS IT, KOJOU AKA-TSUKI?
YOU'RE IN MY WAY.
HEY... WHAT'S THAT SMELL!?
SUN (SNIFF)
SMELL?
...!
THE SMELL OF BLOOD!?

HANG IN THERE!

HEY, ASTARTE!
ASTARTE !!

TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES AND THIRTEEN SECONDS AGO...
...A PERSON CALLING HIMSELF KRISTOF GARDOS ENTERED SCHOOL GROUNDS.

REPORT TO THE FOURTH PRIMO-GENITOR.
SUU (SLOW)
!

THESE WOUNDS... GUNSHOTS!? WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
AND THIS SCENT... ARTIFICIAL BLOOD...A HOMUNCULUS?

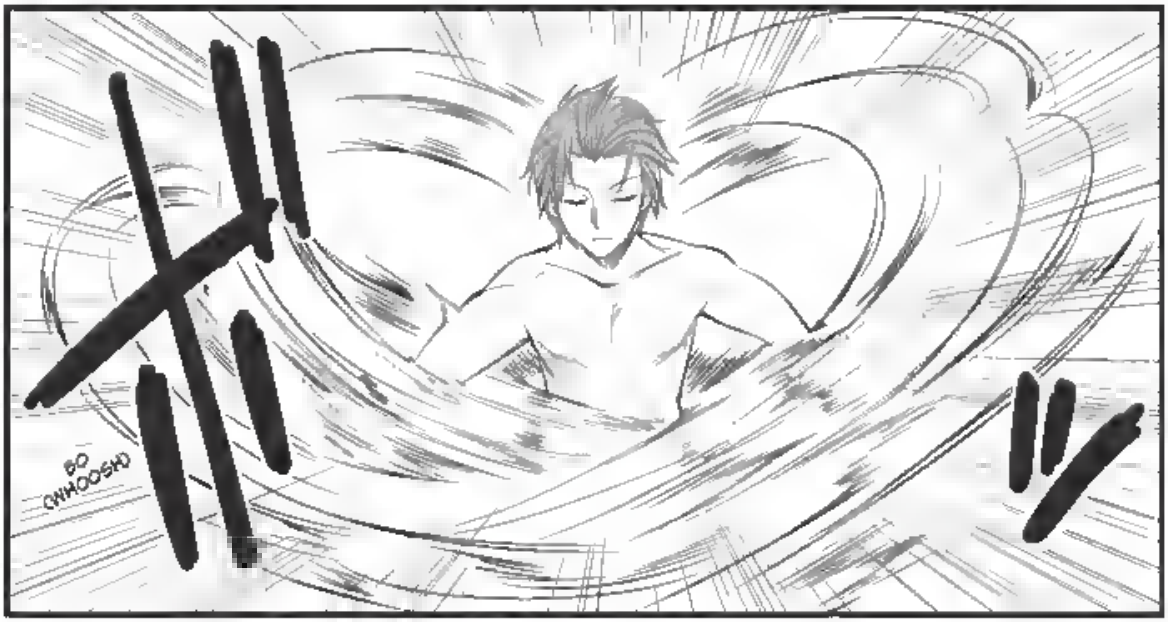
WHA ...!?
HE HAS TAKEN ASAGI AIBA, NAGISA AKATSUKI, AND YUKINA HIMERAGI WITH HIM.
MOVE! HER NERVOUS SYSTEM MAPPING SHOULD BE TYPE I: STANDARD HUMANOID.
H-HEY! ASTARTE!!
THEIR DESTINATION...IS UNKNOWN ...
GAKU (SLUMP)
...I APOLOGIZE... I WAS UNABLE TO...PROTECT THEM...
I'LL SAVE HER!

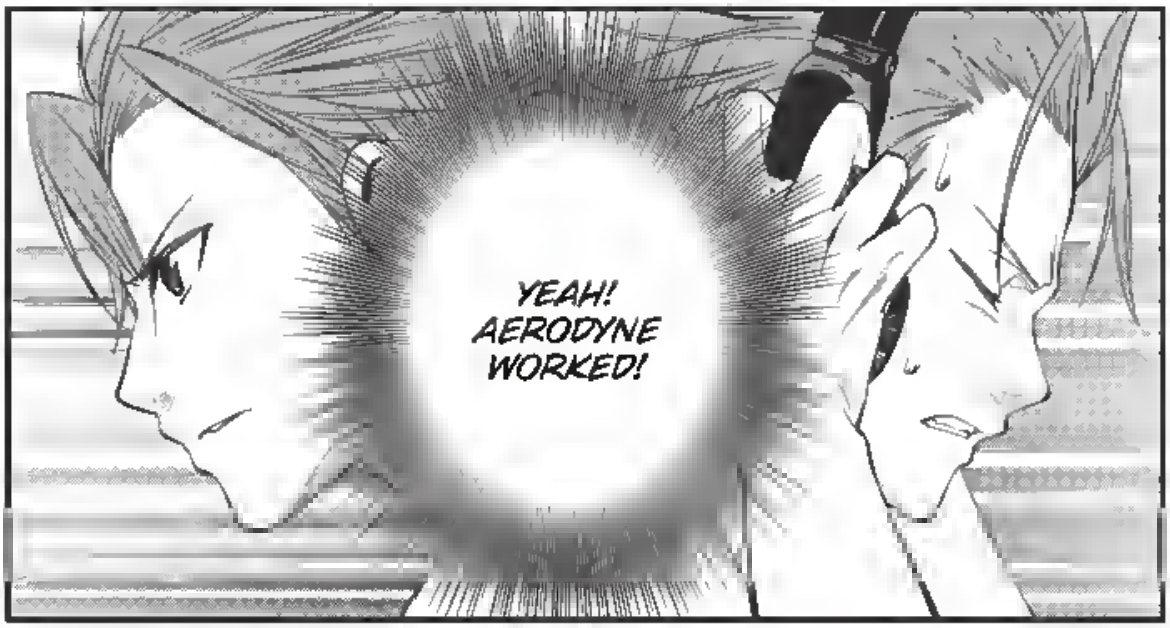
SHIT! WHERE THEY TAKIN' THE GIRLS?
GYLO GWHOOSH
!
THAT GARDOS BASTARD AIN'T RIGHT IN THE HEAD EITHER!
ATTACKING RIGHT AFTER KOJOU WENT WILD, THOUGH...

HELIPORT? ARE THEY TAKING THEM OFF ITOGAMI ISLAND...?
SHEESH.
ZAZAZA (SLIIIIDE)
GU (GULP)
DON'T REALLY WANNA USE THESE, BUT...!

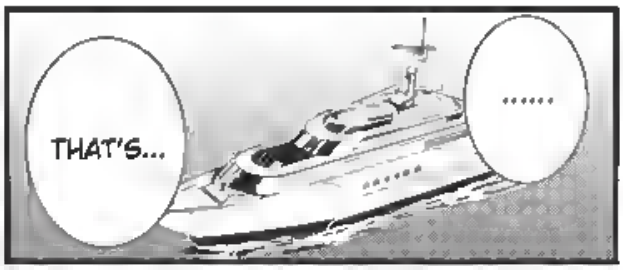
BARARA (WHLIPPA)
WILL IT REACH!?
GARI (CHOMP)
GARI

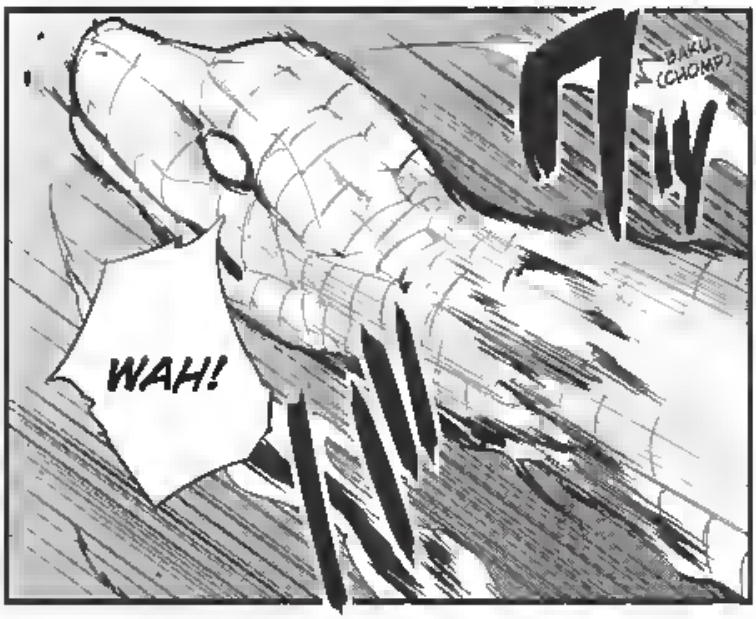
FLWA
(FWSHHH)


BO
(WHOOSH)


YEAH!
AERODYNE
WORKED!

THAT'S THEIR HIDEOUT...?


THAT'S...
.....


WAH!
BAKU (CHOMP)

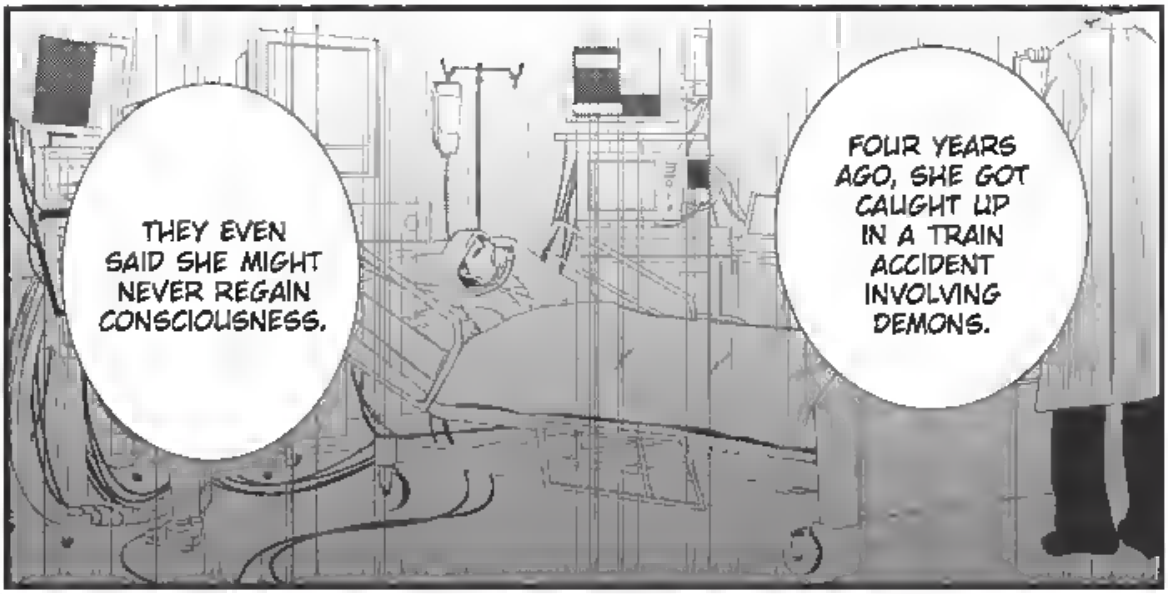
!?
ZOWA (SHUDDER)

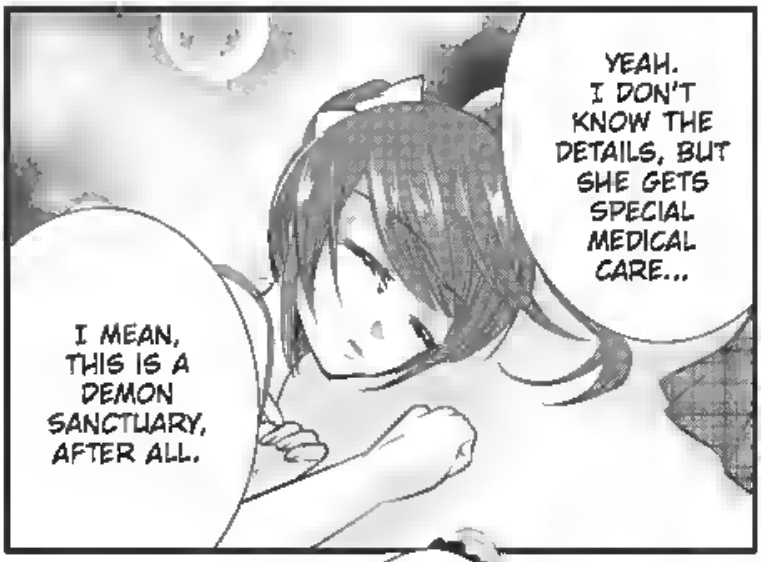
GNH ...!
DOKUN (BADUM)
BA CTURND
DIFFERENT FROM DRUID MAGIC. PERHAPS SIMILAR TO MYSTICS ON THE CONTI-NENT?
ACOUSTIC CONTROL...A RARE ABILITY. THAT'S THE YAZE FAMILY FOR YOU.
FORMING FALSE MUSCLE AND NERVE CELLS THROUGH AIR RESONANCE... A WIND CLONE?
NO WAY. WHY ARE YOU H—?
GOOOOO (RRRUMBLE)

SU (SLIFF)
SORRY. IT'S INCONVENIENT FOR ME IF YOU INTERFERE WITH THEM JUST YET...
PROBABLY.
BO (BWOOM)
...DON'T WORRY, YOU WON'T DIE.

BASHAN
(SPLASH)
HEY...
WHERE DO YOU THINK THIS IS?

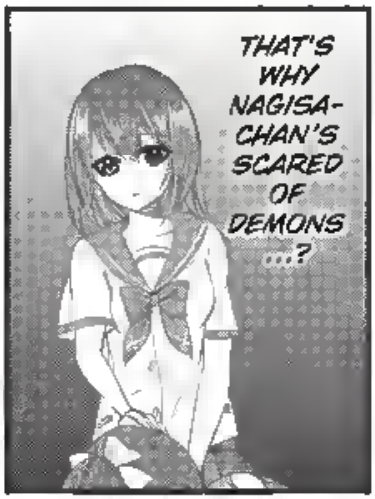
YOU'RE VERY CALM, HUH. YOU'RE NOT SCARED?
HM? AH... THAT ISN'T IT...
...THOUGH YOU'RE CALM TOO, AIBA-SENPAI.
I DON'T KNOW... IT'S ONLY BEEN ABOUT TEN MINUTES, SO IT CAN'T BE THAT FAR...
.....
AFTER SEEING NAGISA-CHAN EARLIER... I FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO KEEP IT TOGETHER, IS ALL.
.....
...NAGISA-CHAN ALMOST DIED ONCE.
THIS STAYS BETWEEN US, YOU UNDERSTAND, BUT...
EH...!?
DO YOU KNOW WHY KOJOU AND HIS FAMILY MOVED TO ITOGAMI ISLAND?
...NO.


FOUR YEARS AGO, SHE GOT CAUGHT UP IN A TRAIN ACCIDENT INVOLVING DEMONS.
THEY EVEN SAID SHE MIGHT NEVER REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS.


YEAH. I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS, BUT SHE GETS SPECIAL MEDICAL CARE...
I MEAN, THIS IS A DEMON SANCTUARY, AFTER ALL.

BUT NAGISA-CHAN DOESN'T SHOW THE SLIGHTEST SIGN OF...

AFTER THEIR PARENTS DIVORCED...
...THEIR MOM DOESN'T GET BACK TO THE HOUSE MUCH, AND I THINK THAT'S ALSO WHY I...


THAT'S WHY NAGISA-CHAN'S SCARED OF DEMONS ...?

HAAH...
IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S REALLY ME THEY WANT...
IT'S MY FAULT YOU GOT INVOLVED IN THIS...
AND... SORRY.
EH?
NO... IT'S NOT...
DO YOU KNOW WHY THEY WANT YOU?
GEEZ! WHERE IS THIS PLACE!? IT'S LIKE A WAREHOUSE ...
PROBABLY RELATED TO MY PART-TIME JOB, THOUGH...
NOT A CLUE.
GU (CLENCH)
IT'S ME WHO SHOULD APOLO-GIZE...

STUFF LIKE WRITING CUSTOM PROGRAMS, INVADING CORPORATE NETWORKS...
IT'S A SPECIALIZED COMPUTER JOB.
...DECIPHERING PASSWORDS... HACKING, IN OTHER WORDS.
PART-TIME... JOB?
IT SEEMS YOU ARE IGNORANT OF YOUR OWN FAME, MISS AIBA.
!
WHY WOULD THEY GO THROUGH ALL THIS TROUBLE, THOUGH?
BEATS ME.
GACHA (KGHAO)
THAT'S WHAT GETS ME ABOUT THIS. WHY ME?

OF COURSE, NOT EVEN THEY SUSPECTED THAT THE FAMED "CYBER EMPRESS" WOULD BE SUCH A PRETTY YOUNG LADY.
AT THE VERY LEAST, THERE IS NOT A SINGLE TECHNICIAN IN OUR EMPLOY WHO DOES NOT KNOW YOUR NAME.

I HIGHLY VALUE YOUR COMPOSURE AND RESOLUTE ATTITUDE.
FORGIVE MY RUDE-NESS.
I DO NOT MEAN THIS AS EMPTY FLATTERY.

NOT TO PUT DOWN CIVILIANS, BUT I WOULDN'T ENTRUST IMPORTANT WORK...
...TO ONE WHO WOULD LOSE HER SENSES HERE...

CHIRA (GLANCE)

HMPH!
YOU THINK I'LL COOPERATE BECAUSE OF A LITTLE TRANSPARENT FLATTERY?

AIBA-SENPAI!!!
NEVER MIND THAT! IF I'M THE ONLY ONE YOU WANT...
...LET THESE TWO GO FREE RIGHT NOW! BUSINESS COMES AFTER!
KI (GLARE)
...!
HEH.
...IF YOU EARNESTLY DESIRE THEIR SAFETY, I CANNOT RECOMMEND THAT COURSE.
IF YOU ABSOLUTELY INSIST, THEN I WILL COMPLY WITH YOUR DEMANDS. BUT...
NONE AMONG US ARE SCOUNDRELS WHO WOULD HUMILIATE NON-COMBATANTS!
WE ARE AN ORGANIZED BAND OF WARRIORS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT!?
IF YOU LAY EVEN ONE FINGER ON THEM—

THAT GIRL IS A HOMUN-CULUS.
SHE IS A TOOL OF WAR.
OH, YEAH, RIGHT!
WHAT ABOUT THE GIRL YOU SHOT AT THE CLINIC!?
GU (CLENCH)
THE SAME AS US...
.....
FINE. I'LL LISTEN TO WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY.
HMPH... GOOD, MISS AIBA.
THIS WILL GO QUICKER.
GO ON, EXPLAIN.
DONA (SIT)
NOW, THEN.
IX
YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?

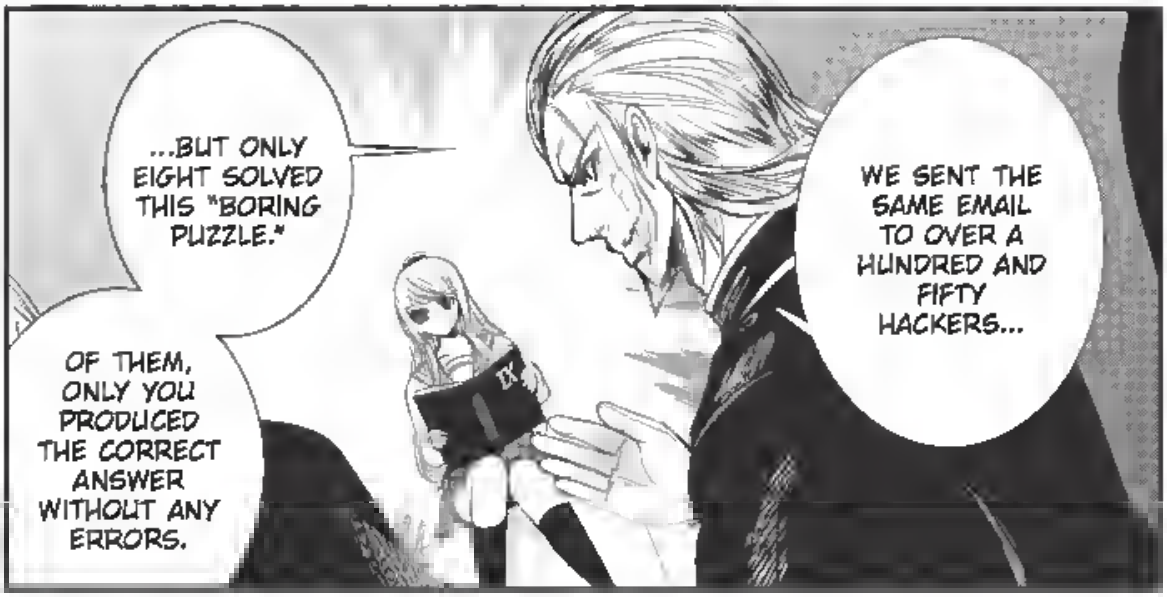
FROM SOMEONE WHO SYMPATHIZES WITH OUR CAUSE.
IT IS THE LATEST MODEL OF THE SUPERCOMPUTER SERIES USED BY ITOGAMI ISLAND'S MANAGEMENT CORPORATION, IS IT NOT?

THIS IS... SOUVERÄN NINE!?
IX
WHERE'D YOU GET ONE OF THESE!?

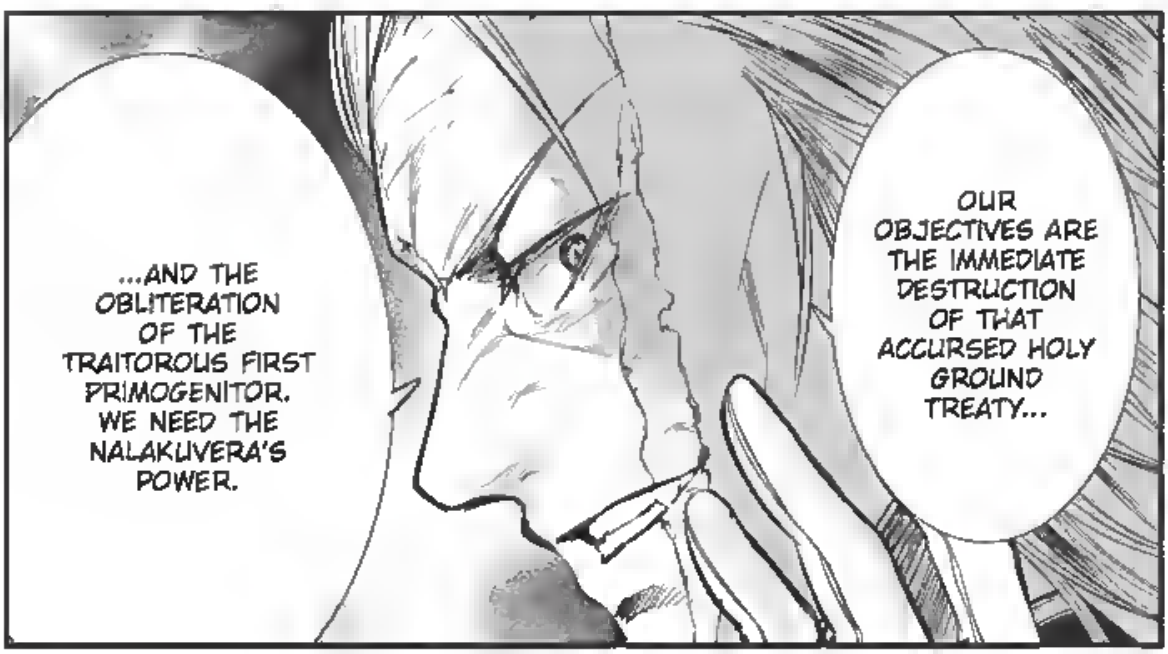
...WE GREATLY UNDERESTI-MATED YOU... WE WILL HAVE TO REVISE OUR ASSESS-MENT.
MY...

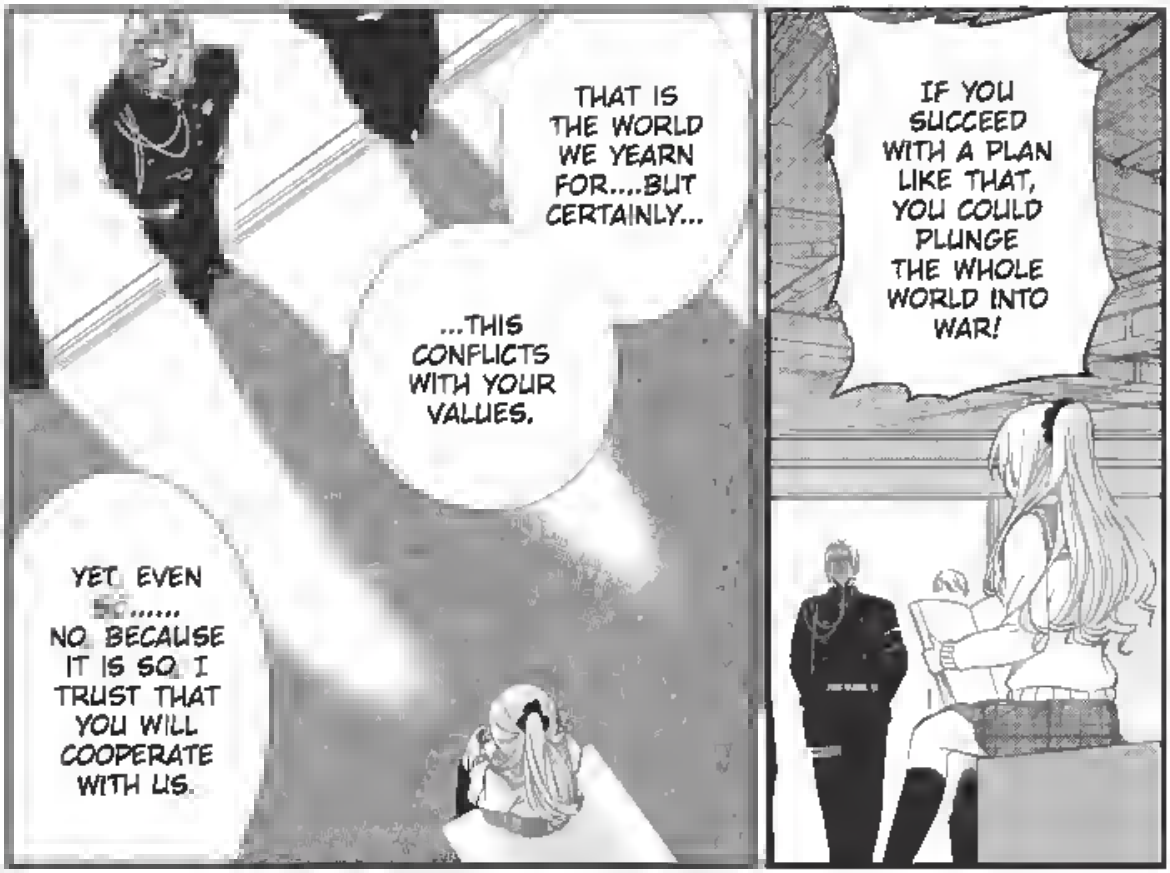
SO YOU'RE THE ONES WHO SENT ME THAT BORING PUZZLE YESTERDAY, AM I RIGHT?

SO YOU WANT ME TO USE THIS TO DECIPHER THE COMMAND CODES FOR THAT NALAKUVERA...?


WE SENT THE SAME EMAIL TO OVER A HUNDRED AND FIFTY HACKERS...
...BUT ONLY EIGHT SOLVED THIS "BORING PUZZLE."
OF THEM, ONLY YOU PRODUCED THE CORRECT ANSWER WITHOUT ANY ERRORS.

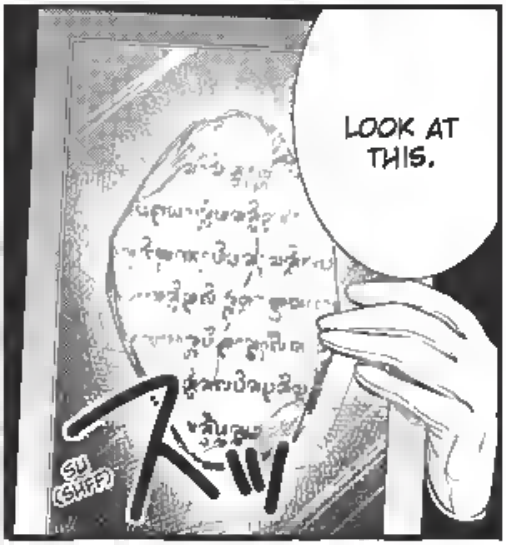
...I HAD A LOT GOING ON THAT DAY! I WANTED AN ESCAPE FROM REALITY...
CHIRA (GLANCE)
?


OUR OBJECTIVES ARE THE IMMEDIATE DESTRUCTION OF THAT ACCURSED HOLY GROUND TREATY...
...AND THE OBLITERATION OF THE TRAITOROUS FIRST PRIMOGENITOR. WE NEED THE NALAKUVERA'S POWER.


THAT IS THE WORLD WE YEARN FOR....BUT CERTAINLY...
...THIS CONFLICTS WITH YOUR VALUES.
YET EVEN .....
NO. BECAUSE IT IS SO, I TRUST THAT YOU WILL COOPERATE WITH US.
IF YOU SUCCEED WITH A PLAN LIKE THAT, YOU COULD PLUNGE THE WHOLE WORLD INTO WAR!

THIS IS THE FIRST OF FIFTY-FOUR STONE TABLETS.
IT IS THE ONE YOU DECIPHERED: "THE FIRST WORDS."

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
HUH?


LOOK AT THIS.
SU (SHIFF)

UPON IT WAS WRITTEN THE NALAKUVERA'S START-UP COMMAND.
IX

DON'T TELL ME YOU...
AH!
!

AND WHAT OF IT? YOU CAN START IT, BUT YOU CAN'T CONTR—

WE CANNOT CONTROL IT, EVEN IF IT THREATENS TO DESTROY THE ENTIRE CITY.
YES, ALL WE CAN DO IS START UP THE NALAKUVERA.

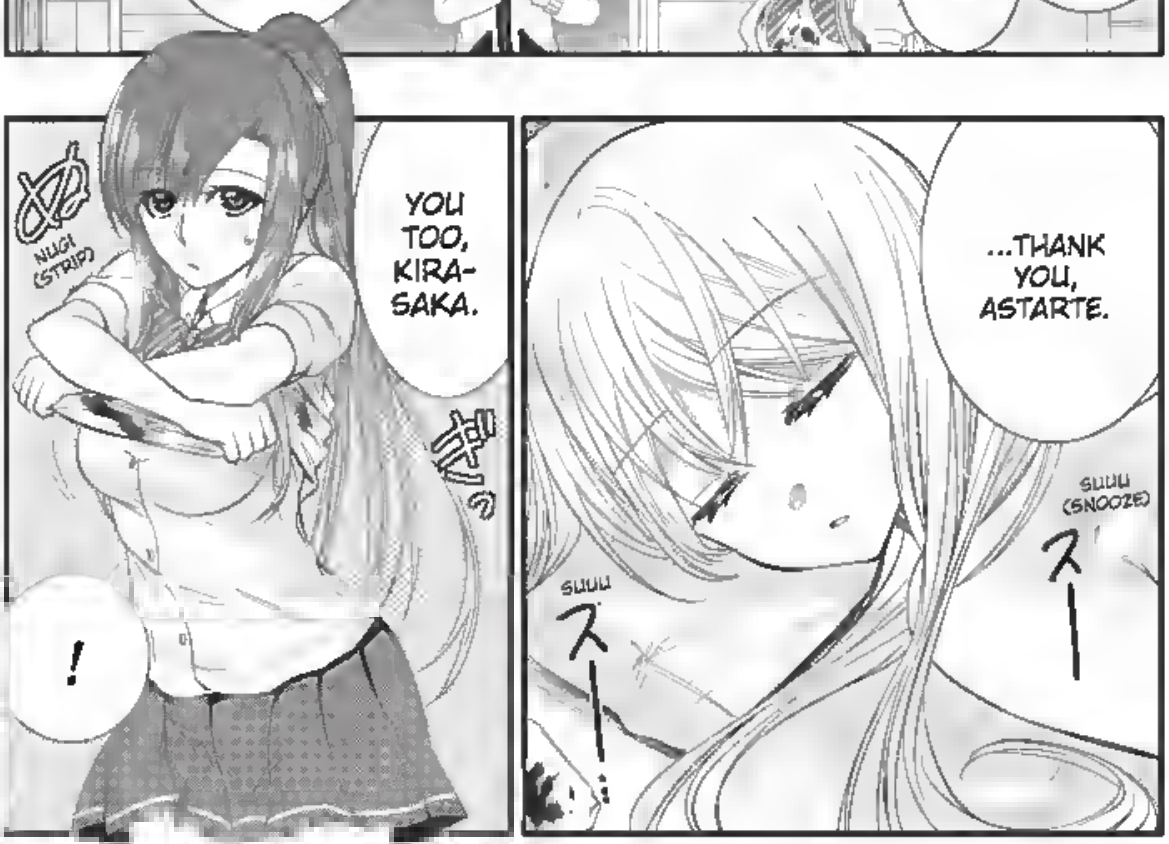
GIRI (GRIT)
...THAT'S LOW!
IX
...UNLESS WE DECIPHER MORE.
GOTCHA!
BRING MORE BANDAGES!
HEY...
...HOW'S ASTARTE DOING...?

A NORMAL HUMAN WOULD'VE DIED INSTANTLY.
I REMOVED THE BULLETS, BUT THE BLEEDING'S BAD...
SOMETHING POWERFUL INSIDE HER IS KEEPING HER ALIVE... BARELY.
RHODO-DAKTYLOS ...?
H-HEY! WHAT ARE YOU...!?
GIRA (GLINT)
BUT WE'RE STILL RACING THE CLOCK...
GOTTA STOP THE BLEEDING FAST!

DON'T WORRY. IT'S LIKE ACUPUNCTURE.
I'LL USE THE BARE MINIMUM TO KEEP HER ALIVE...
TON (TAP)
...AND PUT HER BODY IN STASIS.
THAT'LL MINIMIZE THE EFFECTS OF BLOOD LOSS.
LOOKS LIKE THE AMBULANCE HAS BEEN DELAYED DUE TO THE HELI CRASH...
THIS IS THE BEST I CAN DO FOR HER!
... KIRASAKA.

MASTER IS... CURRENTLY EN ROUTE TO APPREHEND THE TERRORISTS ...
THE KIDNAPPED GIRLS ARE LIKELY THERE AS WELL...
.....
...HEADING TO THE SUB-FLOAT SUSPECTED OF BEING THEIR HIDEOUT...
...I HAVE A SUGGES-TION... FOURTH PRIMO-GENITOR ...
ASTARTE!?

SO THE GIRLS ARE WHERE NATSUKI-CHAN'S HEADED...
.....
LOOKS LIKE THE TREATMENT WORKED. SHE'S CALM...
...AND ASLEEP.


NUGI (STRIP)
YOU TOO, KIRA-SAKA.
!
...THANK YOU, ASTARTE.
SUUU (SNOOZE)
SUUU

PUI (SNUB)
...H-HMPH!
IT'S NOT LIKE I DID IT FOR YOU!
I'M GLAD YOU WERE HERE!
THANKS.
DAAH!! GEEZ!!
SILENCE, PERVERT!!
HUH!? YOU'RE JUST TAKIN' OFF YOUR VEST!
WHY ARE YOU STARING WHILE I CHANGE! DIE ALREADY!
OKAY, LET'S GO!!
Continued in Volume 5

STRIKE THE BLOOD

DEFINITION

<< HYPER ADAPTER >>

A natural psychic not reliant on spells or rituals. Their abilities come in numerous varieties, including many that cannot be reproduced using magic. Experiments developing and strengthening hyper-adaptive abilities are conducted in Demon Sanctuaries.

AFTERWORD

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PICKING UP THIS VOLUME. THANKS TO THE HELP OF MANY PEOPLE, WE WERE ABLE TO GET OUT VOLUME 4 SAFELY.

IN THIS VOLUME, SAYAKA AND VATTLER ARE INTRODUCED, WHICH I THINK MAKES IT LIVELIER THAN PREVIOUS ARCS. I THINK I'M EVEN MORE EXCITED NOW, THINKING ABOUT HOW FUN IT WILL BE TO DRAW THEIR ADVENTURES IN THE FUTURE.

I'M TRULY GRATEFUL TO MIKUMO-SENSEI, MANYAKO, MY EDITOR, ALL THE FRIENDS WHO'VE HELPED, AND MY FAMILY.

I HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN NEXT VOLUME.

TATE 2014.3

SPECIAL THANKS

GAKUTO MIKUMO-SENSEI
MANYAKO
WINFANWORKS
ISSEI / RYUU
KEI / KOJIMARU
KOMU / ALL THE FAMILY

...AND YOU!

STRIKE THE BLOOD 4

TATE
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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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